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THE CENTURY BIBLE

A MODERN COMMENTARY

EDITED BY

PRINCIPAL W. F. ADENEY, M.A., D.D.

◆

THE MINOR PROPHETS

HOSEA, JOEL, AMOS, OBADIAH
JONAH, AND MICAH

EDITED BY

REV. R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.

OXFORD
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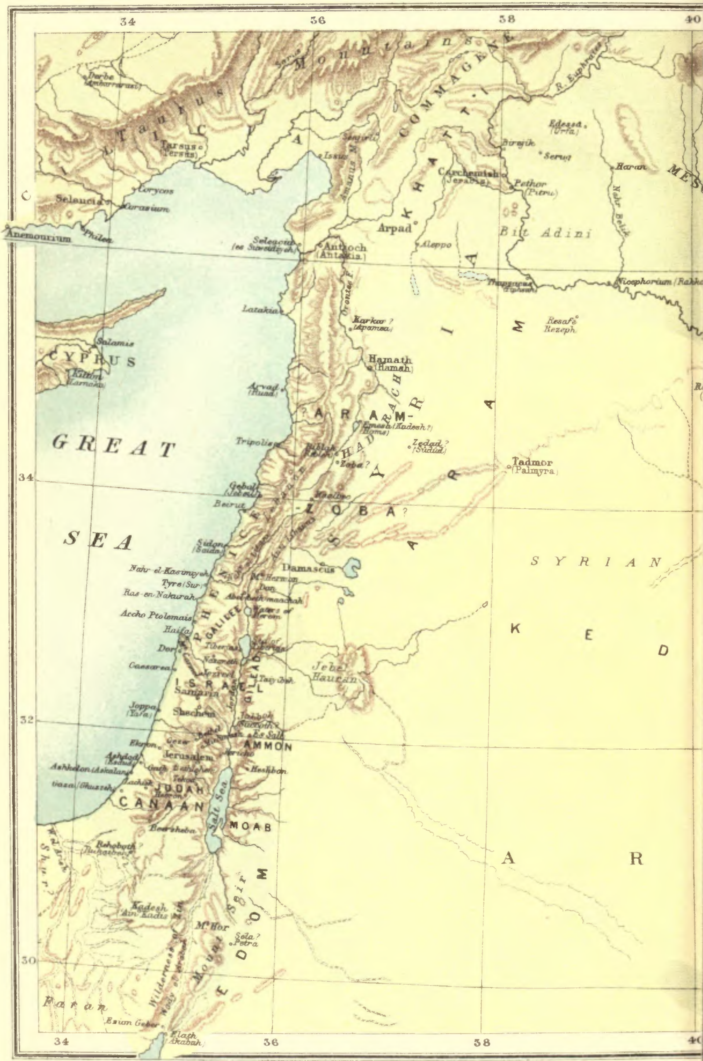
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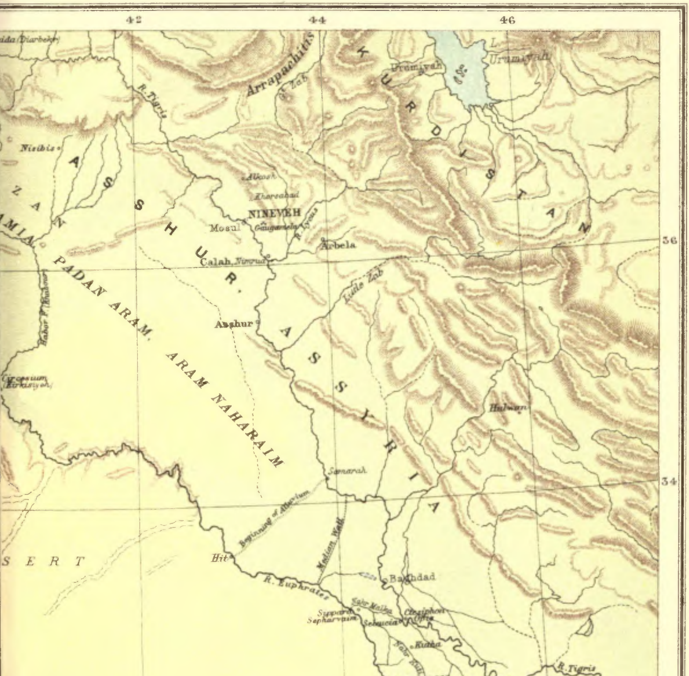

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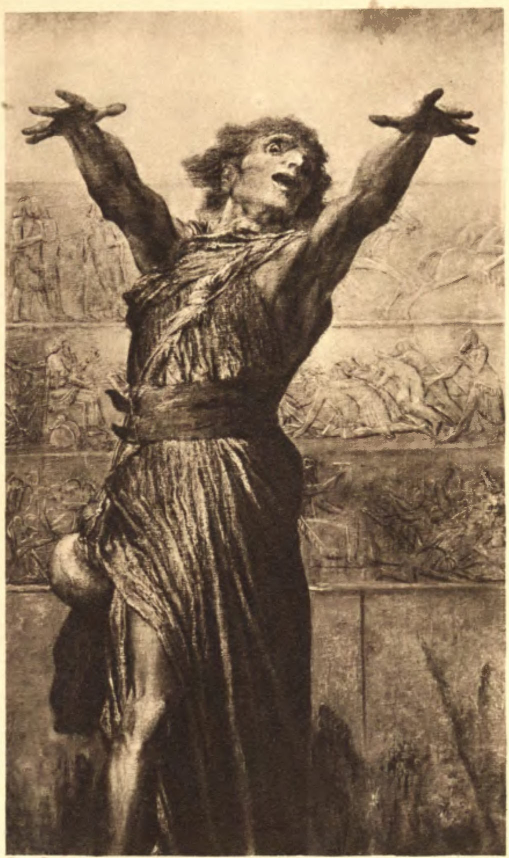

Photo, Fred Hollyer.

JONAH.

BY G. F. WATTS.

The Century Bible

A MODERN COMMENTARY

The Minor Prophets

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah

INTRODUCTIONS
REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES
ILLUSTRATIONS

EDITED BY
REV. R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.

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SYRIA, ASSYRIA, AND BABYLONIA.

THE MINOR PROPHETS

HOSEA, JOEL, AMOS, OBADIAH JONAH, MICAH

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

*

THE MINOR PROPHETS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THIS volume contains the first six of what are called the *Minor Prophets*: in the Hebrew Canon that means the first half of a single volume; for the writings from Hosea to Malachi are all classed together as *The Book of the Twelve.* At a very early period the names attached to the several sections of the book were taken to be those of twelve prophets; hence we get the allusion in Ecclus. xlix. 10, '*Also of the twelve prophets may the bones flourish again out of their place. And he comforted Jacob, and delivered them by confidence of hope* [1].' But a careful study reveals the fact that while there are peculiarly distinct persons, whose writings are collected in the group, e. g. Hosea, Amos, Micah, some of the names are quite shadowy, e. g. Obadiah, Jonah, Malachi, and in some cases the date and circumstances of the document are impossible to fix, e. g. Joel.

The best way to regard this book therefore is as an anthology of prophetic utterances, unfortunately not arranged in chronological order, ranging over the whole period of prophetic activity in Israel, viz. from the eighth to the fourth century B.C. or even later. The book does not precede or follow what might be called the book of the *Four Major Prophets*, it runs parallel with it. Amos and Hosea are the earliest written prophecies, Micah is the contemporary of Isaiah; the rest of the fragments are spread over the remaining period of Hebrew history till after the Exile. Joel may be long after the Exile, almost as late as Daniel. There are passages even in Micah which may have been added in the latest period.

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[1] Cf. 2 Esdras i. 39, 40, 'Unto whom I will give for leaders, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Oseas, Amos, and Micheas, Joel, Abdias, and Jonas, Nahum, and Abacuc, Sophonias, Aggaeus, Zachary, and Malachy, which is called also the angel of the Lord.'

This feature last referred to must be constantly borne in mind. Even where we get genuinely autograph writings, such as Amos, Hosea, and Micah, it appears that later fragments have been added or inserted by the prophetic hands which edited the prophecies and compiled the collection.

It is the legitimate work of the lower criticism to correct the text, which in many cases, especially in Hosea, is very faulty, and often unintelligible, a fact which accounts for the neglect of *The Book of the Twelve* in the religion and worship of the Church. And it is the legitimate work of the higher criticism to distinguish the different authorship and dates of the several parts of the whole volume. Finality is not reached, and perhaps it never can be. But already many a passage glows with new beauty and carries home new truth as it is disentangled from its surroundings and set in its proper place and period (see e.g. the last chapter of Micah), and Bible students would do well to notice how criticism is hallowed in its dealings with such a book as this—how, so far from taking the Bible from us, it gives it to us for the first time intelligible and therefore interesting.

The following Commentary makes constant use of Pusey, who followed Pococke, and closed the older period of dogmatic exegesis: but it is based on Wellhausen, Nowack (in the *Hand-Kommentar*), and Prof. George Adam Smith, supplemented by Prof. Driver and Prof. Cheyne wherever their help is available, and checked by the more conservative work of Keil and Orelli. Pusey's great work can never be out of date; it is rich in erudite illustration from the Fathers, from other Church writers, and from such travellers and scientific authorities as throw light upon the subject. And, further, it glows with a beautiful piety; it is, like Godet's commentaries on the New Testament, an applied homily all along. But, on the other hand, it is dogmatic and uncritical; it never tells us what Scripture intended, but only what the Church has read out of, or into, Scripture.

The modern commentators are without Pusey's charm, but they give us the solid foundations on which some future Pusey may rear a structure no less pious and more durable. Prof. George Adam Smith in the *Expositor's Bible*, by his brilliance and sympathy and practical applications, has anticipated in part that coming Pusey; but the work both of the lower and of the higher criticism must reach more assured results before a commentator can write with Pusey's unfaltering dogmatic confidence, and rear on the new foundations structures as imposing and as authoritative as the old. The brief Commentary in this volume can claim only this merit, that it regards with an equal admiration the work of the old school and that of the new, and it endeavours within its narrow limits to give the results of combining the best features of both.

CHRONOLOGY.

The dates covered by the six prophets dealt with in this book are given according to Prof. Marti's Table in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (article, CHRONOLOGY). There are seven fixed points in the period from the time of Amos to the fall of Jerusalem, established by the exact Assyrian Chronology. The other dates are conjectural, and may be disputed.

CERTAIN DATES.	PROBABLE DATES.	
B.C.	B.C.	
	789–740	Uzziah reigns over Judah.
	782–743	Jeroboam II reigns over Israel.
	743	Zechariah, Shallum over Israel.
	742–737	Menahem over Israel.
	739–734	Jotham reigns over Judah.
738		Menahem's tribute to Tiglath-pileser III.
	736	Pekahiah reigns over Israel.
	735–730	Pekah over Israel.
734		Ahaz's tribute to Tiglath-pileser.
	733–721	Ahaz reigns over Judah.
732		Ahaz's homage at Damascus to Tiglath-pileser.
	729–721	Hoshea reigns over Israel.
721		Samaria captured by Sargon.
	720–693	Hezekiah reigns over Judah.
701		Sennacherib's army before Jerusalem.
	692–639	Manasseh reigns over Judah.
	638	Amon.
	637–608	Josiah.
	608	Battle of Megiddo. Jehoahaz reigns.
	607–597	Jehoiakim reigns over Judah.
604		First year of Nebuchadnezzar (604–562).
	597	Jehoiachin king over Judah.
	596–586	Zedekiah.
586		Fall of Jerusalem.

HOSEA

INTRODUCTION
AND
REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

'The other prophets explored the kingdom of God, Hosea took it by storm' (Prof. G. A. Smith).

HOSEA

INTRODUCTION

ALL that we know of Hosea (= 'Salvation,' identical with the original of Joshua, Num. xiii. 8, and with the last king of Israel, 2 Kings xv. 30) is gathered from the little book which bears his name. The opening verse is the title to the book, when or by whom appended we cannot say; but there is nothing to indicate that the editor did more than infer the date from the contents of the book itself (*Encycl. Biblica*, ii. 2121). Jeroboam II was the fourth and most successful ruler of the house of Jehu; and ch. i-iii, referring to the luxury and vice of that prosperous reign, and denouncing the ruin of that violent house, were evidently composed in the last years of Jeroboam II (782-743 B.C.). The contemporary king of Judah was Uzziah (789-740 B.C.). But as ch. i. 7 seems to refer to the great deliverance under Hezekiah, the editor concluded that Hosea was living and prophesying through the reigns of the kings of Judah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

And ch. iv-xiv evidently date from the years of confusion which followed on the death of Jeroboam in the Northern Kingdom. Zechariah, in whose person the promise made to the house of Jehu came to an end, was deposed by Shallum, and he in his turn by Menahem, who sought the help of the Assyrian king Pul (Tiglath-pileser), 2 Kings xv. 19 f., to strengthen his throne (viii. 9). Another party in Samaria sought the help of Egypt (xii. 1). Menahem reigned from 742 to 737, and was succeeded by his son Pekahiah. But Pekahiah was murdered by Pekah, who united the forces of Israel with those of Rezin king of Damascus in an attack on Judah (Isa. vii). In 729, with the connivance of Tiglath-pileser, Hoshea deposed and murdered Pekah, but then rebelled against his Assyrian suzerain and entered into treasonable negotiations with So (i.e. Sabako) king of Egypt. The Assyrians attacked and besieged Samaria, under Shalmaneser, who had succeeded Tiglath-pileser; and after three years the city capitulated to Sargon, and the Northern Kingdom came to an end, 721 B.C.

The echoes of this stormy period are in Hosea's prophecy. But there is no reference to the conflict of the Northern Kingdom with Judah, or to the Assyrian disaster in 701 B.C. If therefore the title is correct in saying that Hosea was still prophesying in the reign of Hezekiah, we must assume that his later prophecies were not written, or at any rate were not incorporated in his book. His date, then, may be roughly fixed thus: He began his prophetic work about 750 and ended it about 720, but his recorded prophecies do not indicate with any clearness the course of events after 729 (Nowack, p. 4). Dr. Pusey's estimate of the prophetic ministry of Hosea as extending over seventy years is very interesting and impressive, but disappears before the chronological readjustment of later scholars.

The prophecies contained in our book fall into two distinct groups.

1. Ch. i–iii form a narrative of events, which must be taken literally, and the events themselves constitute an allegorical prophecy. We are to conceive the prophet as passing through the singular domestic experience which he describes, and then recognizing that God has permitted these things to happen to him as a lesson of judgement and mercy to Israel. Robertson Smith presented the most probable explanation of the position, the explanation which best reconciles the psychology and the theology of the prophetic experience, when he maintained that Gomer-bath-Diblaim was a real woman; no allegorical

interpretation of her name is offered. Hosea married her, and she became unfaithful, 'a wife of whoredom.' In the bitter experience of her unfaithfulness, and in the strong love and pity which persisted in his own heart for the erring wife, the Spirit of God taught the prophet to read, on the one hand, the unfaithfulness of the land of Israel, and, on the other hand, the tender compassion of God to the people whom He had espoused. This part of the book ends with the pathetic picture of the prophet buying back his wife from the humiliating captivity into which she had plunged herself, and keeping her, not as a wife, but as a ward, still loved and protected in spite of her iniquities. In this act of grace the feeling of God to His guilty children is exquisitely expressed.

2. Ch. iv–xiv. In the later part of the book, except for an occasional reference, the allegory of the domestic tragedy is left on one side, and the prophet proceeds in a succession of brief, pregnant, and sometimes unconnected utterances (Jerome called Hosea *commaticus*, consisting of short clauses), to denounce the political and social corruptions of his time, and to plead with the people to return to their God. The sins of Israel are (1) the worship of Baalim and of images—and for this corruption of the cultus the priests are primarily responsible; they have not taught the people that what God requires is not formal offerings, but mercy and the knowledge of God (vi. 6): (2) the fall and corruption of the kings who followed one another in varying degrees of iniquity, but were all apostate from the great idea of the theocracy: (3) the political alliances with Assyria and Egypt in place of reliance upon God.

For all these things, which constitute the breach of the marriage-tie between Israel and God, the prophet calls on the people to repent. This repentance will not be achieved without another sojourn in the wilderness, and the loss of all the political and religious privileges which have made Israel great. But the love to his unfaithful wife inspires the prophet with the confidence that God will yet draw Israel into the desert, and there win back the alienated heart.

The book ends with an appeal, passionate and tender, in which the voices of the prophets and of God and of the repentant people form a great amoebean symphony. The fall of the nation, and the deposition of the apostate kings, are forgotten, and nothing remains but that eternal and spiritual drama transacted between the soul and God, which is the underlying substance and the overarching purpose of all Holy Scripture.

It is this permanent element, irrespective of the date, the origin, and the historical circumstances of the book, which to our fathers constituted the sole value of a prophetic writing. But this element is not lost or weakened, when we, at the foundation of the spiritual structure, seek to understand, more curiously than our fathers did, the conditions which gave rise to the prophecy and the human elements which mingle with its composition.

While no one would dispute the authenticity and integrity of the book as a whole, there are scholars who regard ch. xiv as the work of a later hand, though Robertson Smith ascribed it to Hosea, and Nowack, the latest and best commentator in Germany, is not inclined to entirely reject it. On the other hand, many verses and passages seem to have been added after the time of the prophet, and the arrangement of the oracles is sometimes so strange that we cannot ascribe it to Hosea himself.

The references to Judah (i. 7, 11, iii. 5, iv. 15, v. 5, 10, 12–14, vi. 4, 11, viii. 14, x. 11, xi. 12, xii. 2) read like interpolations by an editor who felt the exclusive reference of Hosea to the Northern Kingdom unsatisfactory; and in some instances Judah has been substituted for Israel or Ephraim (e.g. v. 10, 12–14, vi. 4, x. 11, xii. 2 (3).

On the other hand, it seems too arbitrary to say, with the article in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, that all the hopeful passages (i. 10—ii. 1, ii. 16-23, iii. 5, v. 15—vi. 3, vi. 11—vii. 1, xi. 10f., xiv. 1-9) are added by a later reviser, and that Hosea's outlook was one of unrelieved gloom. This not only ignores the spiritual quality of the revelation of God generally as the thought of one who in wrath remembers mercy, but it forgets that the vital experience of Hosea, the pity for his fallen wife, which distinguishes him from the stern moralist, his contemporary Amos, and makes him, with the possible exception of Jeremiah, the tenderest of all the prophets, had opened up to him the whole mystery of the Divine forgiveness, and of the ultimate restoration of the apostate people.

SYNOPSIS

I. The Title. i. 1.

II. The First Division: a narrative, ch. i and iii, with an exposition of it inserted, ch. ii.

(1) Israel's whoredoms with the Baals, i. e. the calf images (cf. viii. 6), ii. 2–5.

(2) Israel's perplexities as Lo-ruhamah ('the unpitied'), ii. 6–13.

(3) Israel's exile and discipline in the wilderness, ii. 14–18.

(4) Israel's repentance and new espousals, Lo-ammi changed into Ammi, ii. 19–23.

III. The Second Division. iv–xiv.

Israel's apostasy and unfaithfulness to his God.

(1) A people in Moral Decay. iv—vii. 7 mainly occupied with a denunciation of the perverted cultus. There is no knowledge of God in the land. The spirit of whoredom; Baals at the central sanctuary and at the local shrines have taken the place of Yahweh; these are Israel's paramours.

(2) A people in Political Decay. Ch. vii. 8—x mainly occupied with the internal politics of Israel and with the external alliances, both equally violations of the true trust in God.

(3) Ch. xi. 1–11. The fatherhood and humanity of God.

(4) Ch. xi. 12—xiii. The final argument.

(5) Ch. xiv. The great and affecting call to repentance.

The message of Hosea, the contribution which he makes to religion, is this: God loves His people. Amos speaks of the righteousness of Yahweh, Hosea calls it love. God is spiritual and He is holy. What He demands is not sacrifice and ritual, but piety of heart towards Himself, expressing itself in 'mercy' to men. In the wilderness at the Exodus, Israel first found this personal relation with God, and 'it is in the wilderness that it shall be perfectly realized again, when Israel, destitute of all sacramental tokens of Yahweh's favour, land, corn and wine, shall feel that he possesses God Himself, and shall respond as in the early days' (Prof. A. B. Davidson).

Such an inward conception of religion transcends the Old Testament standpoint, and is in the deepest sense an evangelic prophecy; while the mode of realizing the spiritual by means of suffering, privation, Gethsemane and Calvary, becomes a striking anticipation of the method of our redemption.

HOSEA

THE word of the LORD that came unto Hosea the 1
son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and
Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam
the son of Joash, king of Israel.

When the LORD spake at the first by Hosea, the LORD 2
said unto Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredom

---

i. 1. *The Title.*

1. The word of the LORD: i. e. Yahweh. The sacred name יהוה is usually rendered 'LORD.'

the son of Beeri. If Hosea had not told us his father's name fame would not have recorded it. The agricultural references in the book imply that the family was reared close to the soil. Jewish tradition gratified its pride and ingenuity by identifying Beeri (= 'my well') with Beerah the Reubenite prince (1 Chron. v. 6). A Jewish legend says that Hosea died in Babylon, and the body was carried back to Galilee and buried in Safed (Neubauer, *Geogr. du Talmud*, 227).

in the days of Uzziah . . . Hezekiah. That would bring the date down at least twenty-three years after the death of Jeroboam. But the clause was evidently inserted by a later hand, as its place before 'in the days of Jeroboam' indicates. (See Introd.)

in the days of Jeroboam II: 782–743 B.C., i. e. 750 or thereabouts. This date may well have been given by the prophet himself for the first three chapters. But considering his close connexion with the Northern Kingdom, and his allusions to the political conditions after Jeroboam's death, it seems probable that if Hosea had himself given the date, he would have inserted the names of Zechariah, who succeeded Jeroboam, and of the usurpers who followed Zechariah. (2 Kings xiv–xvi.)

i. 2–9. ***Hosea's marriage as the beginning of his prophetic life.***

2. by Hosea may mean 'with' Hosea. See Num. xii. 2–6; Zech. i. 9. More probably it means 'through Hosea': cf. 1 Kings xxii. 28.

a wife of whoredom. Everything, as Wellhausen says, tends to show that Gomer-bath-Diblaim was only a 'wife of whoredom' after her marriage, and the birth at any rate of one of

and children of whoredom: for the land doth commit
3 great whoredom, departing from the Lord. So he went
and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; and she con-
4 ceived, and bare him a son. And the Lord said unto
him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and
I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of
Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel

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her children. She was not a whore; but when Hosea had married her she became an adulteress (iii. 1). This brought home to the prophet the truth which he had to deliver. Yahweh espoused Israel originally as a chaste maiden; the sins were subsequent to the covenant. Pusey tries to justify the marriage of a whore by Divine command: 'we must not imagine things to be unworthy of God because they do not commend themselves to us.' But this hard saying is not required here. It was only on reflection, when Gomer's character had become manifest, that Hosea saw how this divinely ordered marriage was the symbol of Israel's apostasy from God, and his own love for the erring wife was the prophecy of God's unfailing compassion to Israel.

3. Gomer the daughter of Diblaim. Pusey's interpretation of Gomer as 'completeness' and Diblaim as 'a double lump of figs' is very doubtful. The interest of the names is rather that they are shown to be historical by the fact that they have no allegorical meaning, and they reveal the custom of the humbler folk in selecting names which did not, like the more distinguished names of that period, include the name of God, El, or Jah.

4. Jezreel: *lit.* 'God sows,' ii. 22. The immediate reference is to 2 Kings x. 11, the slaughter of the house of Ahab carried out by Jehu at the command of God. For that vengeance on a guilty dynasty Jehu was continued on the throne to the fourth generation; Jeroboam II was the third. But the guilt of the cruelty and self-seeking which characterized the execution of the sentence remained, and was now to be expiated in the fall of the house of Jehu. But while the name Jezreel was given to the child as a reminder of the ancient guilt of a hundred years ago, it was also a reminder that the disaster which should avenge it would occur in the same place, that plain of decisive battles which stretches from Mount Carmel to the Jordan. We do not know of any fulfilment of this forecast. Pusey's attempt to find it in x. 14 is forced. The name Jezreel also, in spite of the threat, contained also a promise: Yahweh would sow again His scattered and uptorn people.

and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease.

to cease. And it shall come to pass at that day, that 5
I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.
And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And 6
the LORD said unto him, Call her name Lo-ruhamah: for
I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, that
I should in any wise pardon them. But I will have 7
mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by
the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor

Wellhausen, followed by Nowack, insists that this prophecy was not exactly fulfilled, because the house of Israel did not perish with the house of Jehu, but survived for ten or twelve years longer under the shadowy and inglorious usurpers who followed Zechariah. But there is nothing in the text to show that the house of Israel was to perish at the same time as the house of Jehu, and if the prophet had intended such a synchronism, when he came to write his prophecies after the fall of Zechariah, and while the house of Israel still dragged on its inglorious existence, he would have corrected his words. The name of this first-born child, therefore, while not yet a reproach to the mother, and while containing within it a seed of mercy, was a warning that Jehu's house should fall for 'those old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago,' and that the dynasty of the Northern Kingdom should perish, if not by the same blow, very soon afterwards.

6. Lo-ruhamah (Rom. ix. 25; 1 Pet. ii. 10). The birth of the daughter indicates a fresh discovery of the wife's perfidy, and therefore a more hopeless punishment of the people symbolized. It is an awful moment when we find that we have drifted beyond the mercies of God. And here the threat is of an irretrievable disaster. The Northern Kingdom disappeared from history; its people were irrevocably scattered. The Ten Tribes, as we commonly call them, melted away like the morning dew.

7. Wellhausen unhesitatingly pronounces this and the other verses relating to Judah interpolations (so Prof. G. A. Smith, p. 213). To this judgement in the present instance Nowack assents. The statement interrupts the narrative. The phrase **the LORD their God** is later than Hosea. And further, the description of deliverance refers to the rout of Sennacherib in 701 (2 Kings xix; Isa. xxxvii). On the other hand, if Hosea lived till the time of Hezekiah, as the title asserts, he might himself have made this interpolation. In any case it is fortunate that we retain the *textus receptus*, and have not to accept Wellhausen's text mutilated by these subjective judgements.

by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.
8 Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived,
9 and bare a son. And *the Lord* said, Call his name
Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be
your *God*.

10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as
the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor num-

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8. when she had weaned: that in the East means three years. Wellhausen rightly says this is a mark of historical reality, that such an interval occurred between the births of Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi.

9. Lo-ammi. The third birth indicates the complete rejection of the people. By a slight and plausible change in the Hebrew 'I will not be yours' becomes 'I will not be your God.'

Remembering the covenant relation which was the pride and glory of Israel, we can imagine no sentence more terrible than this repudiation on the part of God. And we can only admire the courage of the prophet who dared to announce to his contemporaries so unpalatable a truth. We cannot wonder that the prophet's life was, as he indicates, one of persecution and danger.

These three children of Gomer were a standing sign and threat to the luxurious, oppressive, and idolatrous generation of Jeroboam II.

10. In the Hebrew the second chapter begins here (see marg.), and the paragraph i. 10—ii. 1 is obviously one utterance. It is equally clear that the utterance is in glaring contradiction with the severe and irreversible judgements just passed in i. 6, 9. Accordingly, modern commentators, Wellhausen and Nowack, recognize the paragraph as the addition of an exilic writer. Prof. G. A. Smith, on the other hand, says that it cannot be exilic, cf. verse 11, and may easily be Hosea's own, but the paragraph is not in its right place here. Probably if ancient books had been published and edited like ours, such a paragraph would have been, not inserted in the text, but added in the margin or in a footnote. The exilic editor, who knew the spirit of the second Isaiah and Jeremiah, saw the light of promise which was hidden from the sad eyes of Hosea.

But all this is subjective criticism. And it is quite possible that the original prophet himself had these swift transitions from judgement to mercy, so that he never pronounced a doom on his people but immediately the mercy of God broke in upon him like a new dawn (cf. N. T. use of the passage 1 Pet. ii. 10; Rom. ix. 25).

in the place: i. e. in that land of Palestine from which the

bered; and it shall come to pass that, in the place where
it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, it shall be
said unto them, *Ye are* the sons of the living God. And 11
the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be
gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one
head, and shall go up from the land: for great shall be
the day of Jezreel. Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; **2**
and to your sisters, Ruhamah.

Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife, 2

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house of Israel was to be driven by the Assyrian. Pusey's mystical interpretation is 'the place of the Dispersion,' 1 Pet. i. 1.

11. the children of Judah and the children of Israel . . . shall go up from the land. This reuniting of the divided kingdoms (cf. iii. 5) is a bold prophecy for the time of Hosea, but it would be equally bold for an exilic prophet, writing when the Northern Kingdom had been dissipated and lost. The **one head** was never realized until Christ came (cf. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, xxxvii. 22).

The land mentioned, if the passage were exilic, would mean the land of exile. But in the mouth of Hosea, who does not mention the Exile, it could only refer to Palestine. And though the phrase **go up** is used of the return from exile (Ezra ii. 1, 59, vii. 6; Neh. xii. 1, &c.), it could be used of any expedition undertaken by the united and victorious people. Mystically it may refer to the final ascent into the land of our desire.

the day of Jezreel: i.e. the first-born of Hosea. This prophecy reverses the ominous names of his children. Jezreel means no longer the scene of massacre and threatened vengeance, but 'God sows' (see ii. 22); Lo-ammi becomes Ammi, Lo-ruhamah, Ruhamah. The prophecy may point to the 'seed of the woman' and the harvest of Christ.

ii. **1. Ammi:** i.e. my people.

Ruhamah: i.e. a woman who has been pitied.

ii. 2–13. *The threats against guilty Israel under the image of the unfaithful wife, addressed to the people of the land under the image of the polluted children.*

ii. 2–5. *Israel's whoredoms with the Baals.*

2. The whoredom is the worship of the Baals, cf. viii. 6. Amos still admitted that the worship of his time was the worship of Yahweh, though corrupted. But Hosea relentlessly declares that it was not the worship of Yahweh at all, though the people thought it was. That is the interpretation of **she is not my wife, neither am I her husband.**

neither am I her husband: and let her put away her whoredoms from her face, and her adulteries from be-
3 tween her breasts; lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst;
4 yea, upon her children will I have no mercy; for they
5 be children of whoredom. For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine

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from her face . . . between her breasts. The image, taken from the finery with which the whore bedecked herself, refers to the amulets, charms, &c., which in the corrupted worship the people wore.

3. The punishment of an adulteress was stripping. Ezek. xvi. 38, 39. In the interpretation it is a threat of the wasting and depopulation of the guilty land by the failure of the rains and of the harvests. Ezek. xvi. 23-43 seems to be an elaboration of this passage of the earlier prophet.

4. upon her children: in verse 2 they are addressed, here they are spoken of. These sudden transitions and ejaculations, which mark the style of Hosea, tempt commentators (e. g. Nowack) to disentangle and rearrange the verses, treating as interpolation whatever interrupts the even flow of the discourse. But it is doubtful whether these ingenious reconstructions are successful; and they spoil the inimitable succession and play of conflicting emotions which make the attraction, if also the difficulty, of Hosea.

5. my lovers: i. e. the Baals. The primitive Canaanitic ideas survived in the worship of Yahweh, and superstition traced the fruitfulness of the land to charms and rites which belonged to the older cultus, just as numberless superstitions survive in agricultural England to-day, or, to take a more exact parallel, just as the feasts, the ceremonies, and the ideas of Paganism are retained in the worship of Mary and the saints. The Baal-feasts were in name transferred to Yahweh; in ethical principles and results they belonged to the Baals still. The Asherim and the Mazzeboth were in theory transformed for the worship of Yahweh: in practice they had transformed the worship of Yahweh itself (cf. ix. 4). So the calves which the people regarded as symbols of Yahweh were to Hosea merely idols (viii. 5, x. 5, xiii. 2). We must understand the prophet therefore to be denouncing, not

oil and my drink. Therefore, behold, I will hedge up 6
thy way with thorns, and I will make a fence against
her, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall 7
follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them;
and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then
shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband;
for then was it better with me than now. For she did 8
not know that I gave her the corn, and the wine, and
the oil, and multiplied unto her silver and gold, which
they used for Baal. Therefore will I take back my corn 9
n the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof,
and will pluck away my wool and my flax which should
have covered her nakedness. And now will I discover 10
her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall
deliver her out of mine hand. I will also cause all her 11
mirth to cease, her feasts, her new moons, and her sab-

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a conscious apostasy and idolatry, but a corruption of the worship which to his inspired vision was idolatry and apostasy, very much as a Protestant denounces the prostration before the crucifix or the wafer as idolatry and apostasy, while the Catholic still believes that he worships Christ under those symbols.

ii. 6–13. *Israel's perplexities as Lo-ruhamah, the unpitied.*

6. Yahweh will win his erring one by suffering. The fruits of the field, and the wealth, which were ascribed to Baal and used for him, shall be taken away. Then in suffering the people will realize that these were Yahweh's gifts, His love tokens. Thy way' should be 'her ways.'

In suffering the thought turns Godwards, and the resolution orms, 'I will arise and go to my Father.'

Nowack again points out how verses 6, 7 seem to break the hread, 8 follows most naturally on 5. He calls the two verses n interpolation.

8. they used for Baal: i. e. for making an image of Baal, Isa. xliv. 17, but 2 Chron. xxiv. 7 suggests a wider application.

11. When the harvests fail the Baal-offerings cease. The estivals which have been mingled with the corrupt vestiges of he older cultus are no longer to be celebrated. 'New moon and abbath': cf. Amos viii. 5. The sabbath, however, was celebrated

12 baths, and all her solemn assemblies. And I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my hire that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field
13 shall eat them. And I will visit upon her the days of the Baalim, unto which she burned incense; when she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and went after
14 her lovers, and forgat me, saith the LORD. Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilder-
15 ness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor

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even in the Exile. The joy of the harvest festival: cf. 1 Kings viii. 2, xii. 32; Judges xxi. 19.

12. The language here seems to point, not merely to the failure of crops, but to the Exile (Wellhausen).

13. For the dressing at festivals see Exod. iii. 18-22. The special dress was sacred to the Divinity, and laid aside when the festival was over: Ezek. xliv. 19.

earrings: Gen. xxxv. 4, or 'nose-rings,' Gen. xxiv. 47; Isa. iii. 21.

Their worship, under the name of Yahweh, had become the denial of Him, the whole cultus was at heart heathen.

ii. 14-23. *The threats melt into the tenderest promises.*

ii. 14-18. *Israel's exile and discipline in the wilderness.* Nowack regards the whole passage, except verse 17, as an interpolation. The sudden change from threat to wooing is too illogical. But perhaps it is Divine. And indeed Hosea is what he is, the type of the Saviour in thought as in name, because threat and wooing are thus intermingled. As Prof. G. A. Smith beautifully says, 'Other prophets, even Isaiah and Jeremiah, explored the kingdom of God; Hosea took it by storm.'

14. To recover His erring people Yahweh will bring them into the wilderness again where He first espoused them. 'The wilderness, the giving of vineyards, valley of Achor, &c., are, as it were, the wedding-ring restored' (Prof. G. A. Smith). Ezekiel borrowed the image (xx. 35) when the meaning of the wilderness was unveiled as the Exile in Babylon.

speak comfortably: the literal rendering is much more beautiful, 'speak to her heart': cf. Isa. xl. 2.

15. In the wilderness shall be a Vine (a root out of a dry ground): cf. Isa. xxxii. 15. The Valley of Achor (*or*, Trouble),

for a door of hope: and she shall make answer there,
as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she
came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at 16
that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi;
and shalt call me no more Baali. For I will take away 17
the names of the Baalim out of her mouth, and they
shall no more be mentioned by their name. And in 18
that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts
of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the
creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow
and the sword and the battle out of the land, and will
make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee 19

Isa. lxv. 10; Joshua vii. 24, was the valley through which Israel approached the promised land, the valley in which Achan was punished and the sin put away. Again the anguish of exile and failure is to be the door of hope.

make answer: i.e. respond to the love of Yahweh, cf. verse 21.

the day when she came up out of . . . Egypt. The devotion and purity of the Exodus are idealized in memory.

16. Ishi . . . Baali. In the Phoenician religion Baal, i.e. Lord, was the Lord of the land. He held it as a man held a woman whom he had bought and used. Israel had lowered her relation with God to this base connexion. Yahweh was merely her Baal. He will be to her in her regeneration Husband. So in the N.T. fulfilment of this Christ is a bridegroom (John iii. 29) and the Church is the Bride (Rev. xxi. 9). At this point Hosea foreshadows the great mystery of Eph. v. 32.

17. Nowack allows the originality of this verse, following on verse 13. Wellhausen considers it incompatible with verse 16, and decides that one or other must go.

names of the Baalim: e.g. Baal-berith, Baal-zebub, Baal-meon, Baal-zephon. The names Meribbaal, Jerubbaal, Ethbaal, show how in Israel Baal was identified with Yahweh, and accepted in the domestic piety of the people.

18. a covenant . . . with the beasts. A strong poetical figure: the reversal of the threat in verse 12. This fine image appears in the great prophecy of Isaiah and in Job v. 23.

ii. 19–23. *Israel's repentance and new espousals.*

19. I will betroth. The threefold repetition of the word *betroth* is, thinks Pusey, a mysterious allusion to the all-holy

unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in
righteousness, and in judgement, and in lovingkindness,
20 and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in
21 faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. And it
shall come to pass in that day, I will answer, saith the
LORD, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer
22 the earth; and the earth shall answer the corn, and the
23 wine, and the oil; and they shall answer Jezreel. And
I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have
mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will

Trinity. 'To them is the Church betrothed, by the pronouncing of whose names each of her members is, in holy baptism, espoused as a chaste virgin unto Christ.'

A wife was always bought with a price; the price Yahweh pays for His restored wife is 'righteousness, justice, leal love, tender mercies, faithfulness.' The bride's wedding-gift is 'the knowledge of God' which she had lost, verse 13, iv. 1. For the money paid for the bride and the gift given to her see Gen. xxiv. 53, xxxiv. 12. Observe how the language here is prepared for that doctrine of God's righteousness imparted to a sinner which Paul makes the pivot of his gospel.

21. The fruitfulness of the land is the sign or mirror of Yahweh's restored grace. This is represented as a chorus of responsive voices. All proceeds from God; to Him the heavens respond in rain and sunshine; to them the earth replies in productiveness; to it answer the corn and wine and oil.

22. they shall answer Jezreel. To this God-sent fruitfulness answers the grateful heart of—Israel? No, Jezreel is used instead of the expected name, to show how the threat of i. 5 is reversed. That name of cursing has become a name of blessing which signifies 'Yahweh shall sow.'

23. I will sow: for 'her' read 'him,' viz. Jezreel. This certainly suggests a return from exile. But when Nowack regards the whole passage as the interpolation of Messianic hopes by a later hand, with a view of relieving the severity of Hosea's threats, he simplifies the book, it is true, but he robs us of the prophet who mingles sunshine with storm, and hopes with despair. He secures simplicity at the cost of depth.

her that had not obtained mercy. The name of Hosea's first child Jezreel remains unaltered in form, but is reversed in meaning. The names of the two others, the children of whoredoms (Prof. G. A. Smith), are changed from Lo-ruhamah and say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, *Thou art* my God.

And the Lord said unto me, Go yet, love a woman 3
beloved of *her* friend and an adulteress, even as the
Lord loveth the children of Israel, though they turn
unto other gods, and love cakes of raisins. So I bought 2
her to me for fifteen *pieces* of silver, and an homer of
barley, and an half homer of barley: and I said unto 3
her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not

Lo-ammi to Ruhamah and Ammi. The guilty nation whom Yahweh did not pity, but cast off from being His people, is flooded with His redemptive mercy, and restored like an erring wife. For the idea of restoration cf. Ezek. xi. 20; Zech. xiii. 9.

From this, which is the interpretation of the domestic experience of Hosea, the prophet now returns to the domestic experience itself, in its hard and ugly realism.

iii. **1.** Gomer had left her husband, her friend, and become the mistress of another man. Hosea, acting out a symbol which God suggested, but moved by love for his wife, buys her back, and keeps her, though without conjugal rights, with promise of future restoration. This is an allegory. Yahweh will in the Exile deprive Israel of the forms of its religion, but will even thereby win Israel to Himself, and at last Israel shall return and seek the Lord and His Messiah.

love cakes of raisins: 2 Sam. vi. 19. The people believed that the Baalim gave the vintage, and they offered the raisins to them in pagan worship.

Pusey sees a mystical meaning in the dried raisins, compared with the richness of the true vine.

2. I bought her to me. At a later period it was unlawful to take back an adulterous wife: Jer. iii. 1 f. The price he paid for her, fifteen shekels, is the half of the price of a slave (Exod. xxi. 32); the barley, forty-five bushels (Pusey), represents a scanty sustenance for a year. The word 'lethech' is not elsewhere found, and it is only tradition which fixes it as a half-homer. From 2 Kings vii. 1, 16, 18 we might infer that fifteen ephahs were valued at fifteen shekels. In that case the homer and a half of barley (fifteen ephahs), added to the fifteen shekels, would be the price of a slave.

3. The words are obscure, but the sense is clear. Gomer is not to be a wife to any man, not even to her husband; and he on his part will abstain from close relations with her.

play the harlot, and thou shalt not be any man's wife: so
4 will I also be toward thee. For the children of Israel
shall abide many days without king, and without prince,
and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without
5 ephod or teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel
return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their

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4. shall abide many days: this foreshadows not only the Exile, but the long subsequent career of Israel up to the time of Christ and even since.

pillar: i. e. Mazzebah, a familiar object in the primitive cultus of Israel. The stone was presumably a habitation for the Divinity, that he might be present at the sacrifice. Though the Canaanite Mazzeboth were ruthlessly destroyed (Exod. xxxiv. 13, xxiii. 24; also Deut. xii. 3, vii. 5), and their presence was regarded as idolatrous (2 Kings xvii. 10: cf. also 1 Kings xiv. 23, xvi. 32; 2 Kings iii. 2, x. 26, xiv. 23, xviii. 4, xxiii. 14), it is strange to find a late prophet foretelling the erection of a Mazzebah to Yahweh in Egypt, Isa. xix. 19: cf. Isa. lvii. 6. In the Deuteronomic legislation it was forbidden (Deut. xvi. 22; Lev. xxvi. 1: cf. Mic. v. 11–13). In the recent excavations of Gezer one of the most interesting discoveries has been that of a Mazzebah on the clearly-marked site of a local sanctuary.

ephod in the old worship was used for taking the oracles of Yahweh: 1 Sam. xxiii. 6, 9, xxx. 7. Probably it was a stole containing a pouch in which were the stones of divination. Gideon's ephod in Judges xvii was clearly an idol.

teraphim: images of ancestors, used for divining, Zech. x. 2; Ezek. xxi. 21. This remnant of Aramaean idolatry lingered without severe reprobation to the eighth century B.C. (Gen. xxxi. 19; 1 Sam. xix. 13–16). It cannot be said that Hosea sanctions the use of the pillar, the ephod, and the teraphim. He only recognizes them as constant elements in the national cultus, and declares, perhaps with a touch of scorn (Wellhausen), that all these religious privileges (!) will fail in the Exile. 'From such rude forms of ascertaining the Divine will,' says G. A. Smith, 'prophecy in its new order was absolutely free.' But it must be owned that these rude forms are classed with king and prince and sacrifice. The spiritual value of the discipline of the Exile was that religion was to be disentangled from all these questionable externals.

Nowack considers the words 'without king and without prince' an obviously later interpolation; he treats verse 5 in the same way.

5. Wellhausen admits the verse in his text, but strikes out 'and David their king' as a Judaistic interpolation.

David their king. David was dead, but the king like David king; and shall come with fear unto the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for 4 the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. There is nought but swearing 2

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was to come. The Targum of Jonathan says, 'This is the king Messiah; whether he be from among the living, his name is David; or whether he be from the dead, his name is David.' It is one of the passages which the *Bath col*, or voice from heaven, revealed to the fathers.

In Ezekiel use is made of this prophecy, xxxiv. 23, xxxvii. 24.

in the latter days. The mediaeval Rabbi Kimchi on Isa. ii. 2 says: 'Whenever it is said *in the latter days*, it is meant in the days of the Messiah.'

It has been observed how much the passage i. 10—ii. 1 would gain in force if it were inserted here.

The Second Division of the Book. iv—xiv.

iv. *Israel's apostasy and unfaithfulness.*

Acknowledging the difficulty of arranging in any clear order these mingled cries, denunciations, pleadings, and promises evoked by the spectacle of a people in decay, Prof. G. A. Smith suggests a general division, thus:—

iv—vii. 7. *A people in decay morally.*
vii. 8—x. „ *politically.*

Chapter iv is God's general charge against the people. We are to suppose that the strong king Jeroboam is dead; and the anarchy which followed has begun with the days of Menahem.

1. Yahweh is the accuser (Mic. vi. 2; Jer. ii. 9). The root-sin is that there is no knowledge of God. Ritual forgets how much of religion lies in the understanding. When the cultus is ritualistic, and the intelligence no longer is demanded in worship, truth disappears, and with truth what Prof. G. A. Smith calls 'leal love' (mercy).

knowledge of God: not Yahweh, for as Wellhausen says, this principle is not confined to Israel, but applies to mankind. Yahweh, the God of Israel, claims to be known on the general ground that the knowledge of God is the underlying necessity of all religions. Where God is so little known as to be confused with the mere powers of Nature, the moral disappears with the spiritual (ii. 20, iv. 6, v. 4, vi. 3; Jer. xxii. 16; Isa. xi. 9).

2. A more literal rendering would be more impressive. These

and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery; they break out, and blood toucheth
3 blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the
4 sea also shall be taken away. Yet let no man strive, neither let any man reprove; for thy people are as they
5 that strive with the priest. And thou shalt stumble in the day, and the prophet also shall stumble with thee in
6 the night; and I will destroy thy mother. My people

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are verbal nouns, and it is an exclamation of horror: 'Swearing, lying, killing, stealing, adultery.'

they break out: i. e. the people, like a river breaking its banks.

blood: it is the plural, which is used for murder. There is one continuous tale of bloody deeds covering the land.

3. Nature sighs under the sins of men (Wellhausen). It should be present, not future. There is drought and famine on every hand. If **sea** is to be taken literally, and not to cover the lakes and rivers, we may remember with Pusey that the fish shoals sometimes fail along certain coasts, and the discerning eye will see the punishment of God in these natural calamities.

4. The sense of this verse is easier to conjecture than the words to translate. Possibly a correction of the text is necessary. The sense is: 'Yet let no man strive with or blame the people; for the people only follow their priests, who have turned religion into ritual, and have neglected the instruction in the knowledge of God which was their true function.'

Dr. Pusey's ingenuity in getting from this severe judgement of priests the doctrine that to strive with the priests is the worst contumacy is justified by the text, but is refuted by the whole trend of the passage, especially by verse 9. The change in the text, suggested by the LXX, and adopted by Wellhausen, Nowack, and Prof. G. A. Smith, yields good sense: 'Thy people is like their priestlings' (*Chemarim*, the Hebrew word used in x. 5, viz. the priests of the Baal-worship, 2 Kings xxiii. 5; Zeph. i. 4). Then the word **priest** in the text may be carried over, as the vocative, to

5. 'O priest, thou shalt stumble.' And in the sin of the priest the prophet too is involved. The priesthood is a strong hierarchy; the prophets are less organized and less recognized; both these spiritual rulers, one by day and the other by night, stagger down into ruin.

thy mother: viz. the whole nation (Prof. G. A. Smith), the

are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast
rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt
be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law
of thy God, I also will forget thy children. As they were 7
multiplied, so they sinned against me: I will change
their glory into shame. They feed on the sin of my 8
people, and set their heart on their iniquity. And it 9
shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them
for their ways, and will reward them their doings. And 10
they shall eat, and not have enough; they shall commit
whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have
left off to take heed to the LORD. Whoredom and wine 11

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priesthood itself (Robertson Smith). Nowack changes the reading, and so gets the easy 'thy sons.'

6. Hosea does not charge these priests of the Northern Kingdom with being schismatic, as Pusey does, but with being bad priests, and not teaching the Torah (law). Their function was to be the guide and example of the flock in goodness; they had become the leaders in iniquity.

thy children: i. e. the priesthood will now cease in Israel, the priest's children shall be no longer priests. The priesthood, it must be remembered, was hereditary.

8. A multiplied priesthood generally means an apostasy from God. The payments for sin, and the fees for service, wrung from the sin of the people, make the priest's office lucrative, and men crowd into it for mercenary motives.

set their heart on their iniquity: i. e. rejoice in the sins of the people, the atonement for which in offerings and gifts is so profitable to the priest (2 Kings xii. 18). Langland in England, and the reformers in Germany, made the same complaint of their priests. God's judgement of priests is perennial.

9. shall be: rather 'is.'

10. All the feasts made out of the offerings of the people will leave them unsatisfied.

whoredom: the shameful practice in the Canaanitish religion, which arose from worshipping as God the reproductive power in Nature. But in this perversion of the religious sense the reproductive faculty ceases to produce. Contrast the promise given to Ephraim in Joseph: Gen. xlix. 25.

11. Here, on the recognized principle 'like priest, like people,'

12 and new wine take away the understanding. My people ask counsel at their stock, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredom hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God.
13 They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and terebinths, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters commit whoredom, and your brides
14 commit adultery. I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your brides when they commit adultery; for they themselves go apart with whores, and they sacrifice with the harlots: and the people that
15 doth not understand shall be overthrown. Though thou,

Hosea turns from the iniquities of the priest to the similar sins of the people.

understanding: in the Heb. 'heart,' or as we should put it now, 'the brains' (Job viii. 10, ix. 4, xii. 3, 24; Prov. vi. 32).

12. stock: i. e. the senseless wood of which the idol is made (Jer. ii. 27; Hab. ii. 19).

staff: the various forms of taking oracles by means of sticks are comprised under the name of rhabdomancy. Fortune-telling, crystal-gazing, astrology, table-turning, anything in a corrupt age will be preferred to spiritual communion with God, in which the soul takes counsel at the only oracle which cannot fail.

the spirit of whoredom. The literal and figurative meanings intertwine. The whole idolatrous worship is regarded as an adulterous departure from God; but in the idolatrous worship actual acts of fornication played no inconsiderable part.

under their God. The wife is under her true lord, but the people have left Yahweh as Gomer had left Hosea.

13. The sacrifice on the 'high places' is not in itself denounced; but the licentious practices borrowed from Baal-worship, and the Kedeshoth or consecrated harlots (verse 15, see Deut. xxiii. 17) connected with the shrines under the trees, and on the promontories, where the flight of birds and other omens were observed. The punishment is that the immorality cannot be confined to the temple women; the men cannot sin in that licentious worship and keep their daughters and brides pure.

14, 15. the people that doth not understand . . . let not Judah offend is a later interpolation (Nowack). Others treat the whole of verse 15, and that only, as the interpolation.

Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and
come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-aven,
nor swear, As the LORD liveth. For Israel hath behaved 16
himself stubbornly, like a stubborn heifer: now will the
LORD feed them as a lamb in a large place. Ephraim is 17
joined to idols; let him alone. Their drink is become 18

It must be owned this extrusion of the reference to Judah by modern commentators is quite arbitrary. In this place, for instance, it seems quite natural that the prophet should glance at the Southern Kingdom and warn it against the evils which were bringing the Northern Kingdom to judgement.

15. Gilgal and Beth-el were the centres of worship in Northern Israel, established by the first Jeroboam to draw the people from Jerusalem, cf. Amos v. 5. But Beth-el, the 'house of God,' is contemptuously called Beth-aven, 'house of vanity.'

nor swear. Nowack suggests that 'in Beer-sheba' has dropped out. It was coupled with Beth-el and Gilgal (modern Beitin and Gilgilije), Amos v. 5, and thus the prohibition against swearing would be limited to swearing **As the LORD liveth,** in the manner of Beer-sheba ('the well of the oath').

iv. 16-19. These verses are scraps. Wellhausen omits them from the text, because they cannot be connected with what has gone before, nor with what follows, nor with one another. We can only do our best to gather the meaning of each clause by itself.

16. This verse makes sense if we read the second clause as a question, implying a denial, thus: 'Like an obstinate cow is Israel obstinate (cf. Deut. xxi. 18): now will Yahweh feed them like a lamb in a broad place' (viz. as the good shepherd leads his flock in Ps. xxiii). The image is of a stupid animal refusing its food or the yoke. Pusey cannot be right in seeing an allusion to the calves of the corrupt worship: this only introduces confusion.

17. Ephraim, as the most important tribe in the Northern Kingdom, stands, as frequently, the part for the whole. Within the borders of Ephraim was Beth-el, which had become Beth-aven.

joined to idols: viz. the images of Yahweh which had crept into the worship. (The Heb. root means carvings, and also sorrow, Prof. Paterson.) The sin of idolatry is not that the idols are images of false gods, but that they are images at all. To be joined with these material symbols is to be cut off from God who is Spirit.

let him alone: for idolatry there is no cure but the vengeance of the outraged Spirit.

18. Nowack gives up the first clause as untranslatable, and

sour: they commit whoredom continually; her rulers
19 dearly love shame. The wind hath wrapped her up
in its wings; and they shall be ashamed because of
their sacrifices.

5 Hear this, O ye priests, and hearken, ye house of
Israel, and give ear, O house of the king, for unto you
pertaineth the judgement; for ye have been a snare at

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inclines to Houtsma's simple conjecture, that in the Heb. *Ṣar* should be *Ṣod.* This would give 'A company of tipplers: they commit whoredom continually.' The last clause is equally difficult. The feminine **her**—the nation typified as a woman—shows that the verse is out of all connexion with verse 17; 'Her shields (i. e. rulers) have passionately loved shame' is the only rendering possible apart from conjectural changes of text.

19. The text of the Heb. is here also in confusion. The rendering of the R. V. is as good as can be obtained. The wind is the Assyrian conqueror. Pusey happily quotes Shakespeare, 'to be imprisoned in the viewless wind.' Their rejected sacrifices, like Cain's, will cover them with confusion.

v. 1–14 is like a parallel to ch. iv. The charge is now restricted to the priests and princes, and the political strictures which begin properly in vii. 8 are anticipated.

1. the king: probably the unhappy Zechariah, a weak, pliant, self-indulgent, drunken scoffer, who after eleven years of anarchy succeeded his father, only to be murdered (Pusey): 2 Kings xv. 8.

the judgement. There is a deep irony in the double meaning of the word. It belonged to them to judge; the sentence of God is that they shall be judged.

for ye have been: the *chi* translated 'for' is the Greek *hoti*, introducing the direct narrative (Wellhausen). It should not therefore be translated in English. What follows is the substance of what the priests and kings are to hear.

Mizpah: in Gilead (Judges x. 17, xi. 11, 29; Joshua xiii. 26), modern Es-Salt, the scene of Jacob's covenant with Laban. **Tabor,** the Mount of Transfiguration, on the borders of Issachar and Zebulon. Jerome mentions the snaring of birds on the mountain in his day. Here Barak delivered Israel (Judges iv). These two sacred places had become the scenes of the corrupted worship. The Jewish traditions (Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Kimchi) say that here pilgrims to Jerusalem were waylaid and murdered. It is only tradition, but as allegory it interprets the passage.

Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor. And the revolters 2
are gone deep in making slaughter; but I am a rebuker
of them all. I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from 3
me: for now, O Ephraim, thou hast committed whoredom, Israel is defiled. Their doings will not suffer them 4
to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredom is
within them, and they know not the LORD. And the 5
pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore Israel
and Ephraim shall stumble in their iniquity; Judah also

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2. the revolters are gone deep. These difficult words are by a very slight change in the Hebrew letters turned into a clause parallel to the two preceding: 'A pit they have made deep, upon Shittim.' (So Wellhausen, followed by Nowack and Prof. G. A. Smith.) For the pit cf. Ps. xciv. 13; Ezek. xix. 4, 8. Shittim (Num. xxv. 1; Joshua ii. 1, iii. 1), in Moab, where Israel went after Baal-peor. It probably, like Mizpah and Tabor, had become the scene of the modern Baal-worship.

3. These multiplied places of worship, profitable to the priests, were traps to the people, betraying them into idolatry and immorality.

4. The necessity for punishment lies in this, that idolatry, the worship of God under sensible forms, and immorality covered with the garb of religion, are deeds which will not let men return to God. On this Rom. i is an exact commentary.

5. Cf. vii. 10. **the pride of Israel,** the same expression as in Amos vi. 8, 'excellency of Jacob.' Keil, Hitzig, and others, strangely take this to be a periphrasis for Yahweh (Amos viii. 7), which of course gives a simple, though commonplace, meaning to the verb. But the literal meaning is much more profound. Their pride, which prevents them from seeing and confessing their sin, is the real witness against them, not only in the eyes of God, but in the eyes of men (Job xvi. 8). 'In the presence of God there needeth no other witness against the sinner than his own conscience' (Pusey).

Greek tragedy labours with the idea that pride is the sin which ensures the judgement of the gods. A fact so obvious to the ethnic conscience could not be less clear to Israel. 'The pomp of heraldry, the boast of power,' the glorying in resources, money, guns, ships and men, extent and richness of territory, imperial expansion, the arrogant sense of superiority to other nations and other men, which all come under the meaning of such a phrase as 'the pride of Israel,' are to seeing eyes and hearing ears the

6 shall stumble with them. They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him: he hath withdrawn himself from them.
7 They have dealt treacherously against the LORD; for they have borne strange children: now shall the new moon devour them with their fields.

8 Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: sound an alarm at Beth-aven; behind thee,
9 O Benjamin. Ephraim shall become a desolation in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made

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witness against the deluded men puffed up with vanity and doomed to humiliation.

At the same time the LXX reading of the Hebrew verb gives an easier sense than this remote and figurative meaning: 'the pride of Israel shall be humbled to his face.'

6. This shows that the offerings were brought in intention to Yahweh. But the worship under Baal-forms of idolatry and pollution evoked no response.

7. they have borne strange children: a passing reminder of the great allegory in chs. i–iii. A generation has grown up in the superstitious and debasing ritual, and they are no longer Yahweh's children.

now shall the new moon: rather, 'a month,' i. e. any month may bring the swift invader who will cover the fields. And the following verses (8 and 9) present the sudden approach of the Assyrian, the alarm of invasion, and the desolation which follows in its wake.

8. Prof. G. A. Smith gives a spirited rendering:

'Blow the trumpet in Gibeah, the clarion in Ramah;
Raise the slogan, Beth-aven; "After thee, Benjamin."'

The last phrase is the war-cry of the clan of Benjamin (Judges v. 14). A Scotchman can enter into this scene of the rousing of the clans to resist invasion.

9. But the gathering of the clans would be in vain; when the storm of the Assyrian had swept by, it would leave Ephraim, the Northern Kingdom, desolate for ever.

As the invaders were from the North, these towns of Benjamin, Gibeah (1 Sam. xiii. 2, 15, xiv. 16; 2 Sam. xxiii. 29) and Ramah (Judges iv. 5, xix. 13; 1 Kings xv. 17, 22; Isa. x. 29) and Beth-el, here contemptuously called Beth-aven (vide iv. 15), sounding the alarm, indicate that the enemy have penetrated to the southern border of the land.

known that which shall surely be. The princes of Judah 10
are like them that remove the landmark: I will pour
out my wrath upon them like water. Ephraim is op- 11
pressed, he is crushed in judgement; because he was
content to walk after the command. Therefore am I 12
unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as
rottenness. When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah 13
saw his wound, then went Ephraim to Assyria, and sent
to king Jareb: but he is not able to heal you, neither

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10. The discourse passes from the priests to the kings, both of Israel and Judah.

that remove the landmark. This land-grabbing of the nobles in the Southern Kingdom, which overturned the original settlement of land (Deut. xix. 14), is denounced by the prophets of Judah (Isa. v. 8; Mic. ii. 2).

In times of national disturbance unscrupulous men increase their possessions; they grow rich on the ruin of their country.

11. The verse as it stands is difficult. Nowack freely alters the Massoretic text with the help of the LXX, and Prof. G. A. Smith changes 'command' into 'vanity' (LXX, Syr., Chald.). Pusey ingeniously assumes that the 'commandment' is that of Jeroboam (1 Kings xii. 28, 32, 33).

If, however, we are to force our way to a meaning through the existing text, we must read the second clause as a question, implying a negative answer, and take verse 12, as the explanation of the first clause of verse 11, thus: 'Ephraim is oppressed, he is crushed in judgement (*sc.* by Yahweh who is as a moth to him), for was he content to walk after the commandment?'

12. Therefore is not in the text. It should be 'for I am a moth,' i. e. the explanation of Ephraim's crushed condition is that Yahweh Himself has for Ephraim's disobedience become the destroying power in the nation. The moth eats a garment slowly; rottenness, i. e. dry rot or caries in wood, is even a slower process. The judgement in Judah would follow that of Israel after a short interval. Already Uzziah was dead, and the politicians whom Isaiah satirized were guiding Judah to the inevitable doom.

13. The judicial blindness which made Menahem send tribute to Assyria in 738, and so give the Assyrian, who was to destroy the land, a foothold for interference, could only be explained by the awful fact that Yahweh Himself was working the destruction of the people; 'Quem deus vult perdere prius dementat.'

Jareb (x. 6), a nickname for the Assyrian king, meaning 'he

14 shall he cure you of your wound. For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry
15 off, and there shall be none to deliver. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly.

6 Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will

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will contend.' Prof. G. A. Smith translates happily: 'King Pick-quarrel.'

It is hardly worth while, with Wellhausen, to introduce a new difficulty by supplying **Judah** before **sent to king Jareb** in order to complete the parallelism of the verse. The word for **cure** is Aramaic, and points to the dialect of the Northern Kingdom.

14 repeats the reason why Assyria cannot help Israel. Yahweh Himself is the destroyer. The Lord as a lion, xiii. 7. **I will carry off,** *sc.* the prey.

v. 15—vii. 2. In this awful passage Yahweh declares that even the repentance of the people will not avail; it is too shallow, and it is too late.

15. Here is the picture of God withdrawing from His people and leaving them to themselves, putting into their mouths the words of penitence, and saying that He will not accept them.

For Yahweh's **place** cf. Isa. xviii. 4. **acknowledge their offence:** rather, 'feel their guilt.' The next words are better rendered, 'When trouble comes to them they will soon enough seek Me,' and then follows the language of facile repentance and prayer, which, like the general confession lightly uttered in an unthinking congregation, weighs less than nothing.

vi. 1-3. It is a pain to treat these beautiful words of contrition and repentance as a prayer which is uttered in vain and rejected. But it is impossible in any other way to fit them in with what follows, verses 4-11. We are compelled therefore to read the salutary lesson that the confident prayers of penitence and promises of amendment, wrung from our lips in times of trouble, may easily be rejected by God, and rank among 'presumptuous sins.' With this stern teaching of the prophet a new notion of repentance breaks in upon the mind, 'heart-sorrow with a clear life ensuing,' not lip-confession, without the sense of sin or the serious purpose of amendment.

bind us up. After two days will he revive us: on the 2
third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before
him. And let us know, let us follow on to know the 3
LORD; his going forth is sure as the morning: and he
shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that
watereth the earth.

We surrender the beautiful prayer of penitence too lightly used, in order to recover it in the anguish of a genuine sorrow for sin, and the faith of a sure forgiveness at the Cross of Christ.

1. The words are the genuine language of penitence, but alas! they do not represent the true conditions of pardon. That He will heal and bind up is a false hope, too lightly formed. The people are 'returning' unto the Lord, but He on His part has 'returned to His place' (v. 15).

2. 'Two or three days': a common expression of a short time; so in Demosthenes, *De Cor.* xxxv.

Pusey thinks with the Fathers that the verse refers to Christ's resurrection on the third day, and our resurrection in Him. But this Rabbinical and Patristic interpretation of Scripture teaches us what may be read into it, not what may be got out of it. It is only a mystical, as distinct from a historical, interpretation that can find any allusion here to the Resurrection. Is this the 'Scripture' in the mind of our Lord and of his disciples when they thought of his resurrection in three days? (John ii. 19; 1 Cor. xv. 4: cf. Luke xxiv. 46).

Mr. Bartlet says: 'Hosea vi. 2 does not suggest the experience of Messiah himself; yet the idea of solidarity between Messiah and the Messianic people would naturally suggest such a use of the passage in the light of known facts as to Jesus's resurrection' (*Expos. Times*, xiv. p. 120). The Master of St. John's, Cambridge, in *Expos. Times*, xiv. p. 213, shows how this use made of the passage in the N. T. may be justified rabbinically. With another pointing of the same Hebrew letters, it might read, 'He shall raise him up, and he shall be made alive.'

3. let us know. Their standing fault was that they had not the knowledge of God (iv. 1). This repentance verbally, at least, expresses the right purpose. **follow on:** the very words used in ii. 7 for the pursuit of the Baalim.

his going forth is sure as the morning is an appropriate idea. But it is tempting to accept the LXX version, justified by a slight alteration of the text (Giesebrecht), which yields 'As soon as we seek Him we shall find Him.' This exactly expresses the easy, misplaced confidence of men who have not realized the enormity of their guilt.

the rain: i. e. the winter rain (Ezek. x. 13); **the latter rain,**

4 O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah,
what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a
morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth early away.
5 Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have
slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judge-
6 ments are *as* the light that goeth forth. For I desire
mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God
7 more than burnt offerings. But they like Adam have

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the spring rain (Deut. xi. 14; Jer. v. 24). The two rains, the beginning and the end, of the season were essential to a harvest. A beautiful comparison for Him who is the beginning and the end.

4. The reply of Yahweh to this pious and futile prayer takes up another familiar feature of the climate of Palestine. 'Am I like the constant dawn, and the rain on which harvest depends? Your goodness is like the light cloud which is dispersed when the hot sun rises, and like the dew distilled in the night, but gone at once in the morning.' In Palestine the sky is usually clear of cloud by nine o'clock.

5. Wellhausen and Nowack place a gap between verses 4 and 5. The connexion could only be established by a forced train of thought. The repentance is too shallow; their goodness is transitory; therefore, instead of the pardon they expect, the hewing of the prophet, the indignant words of God, and judgements like lightning, will be the answer of the prayer. If, however, we may treat verse 5 as a distinct utterance, we may refer the description to the work of previous prophets—Samuel, Elijah, Elisha (then cf. for the hewing, 1 Sam. xv. 33; 1 Kings xviii. 40).

thy judgements are as **the light.** The Hebrew consonants in these words can be read, and with a far clearer meaning, 'my judgement goeth forth like light,' i.e. lightning.

6. I desire mercy, and not sacrifice. This mercy, 'leal love' (Prof. G. A. Smith), is just what in Israel is like a morning cloud: while the sacrifices, mere acts of the ritual, which God cared nothing about, were frequent and regular.

This great prophetic demand was Christ's favourite quotation from the O. T. Wellhausen points the contrast with 1 Sam. xv. 22, where obedience and not love is demanded in place of sacrifice. Here we get exactly the contribution which Hosea, the evangelic prophet, made to religion. Mere obedience is warmed into love. Samuel certainly did not preach mercy to Saul.

7 again has no close connexion with verse 6. The words are hard to translate; for what can 'there' refer to when no place

transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me. Gilead is a city of them that 8
work iniquity, it is stained with blood. And as troops 9
of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way toward Shechem: yea, they have committed lewdness. In the house of Israel I have 10
seen an horrible thing: there whoredom is *found* in Ephraim, Israel is defiled. Also, O Judah, there is an 11
harvest appointed for thee, when I bring again the captivity of my people.

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has been named? Wellhausen would change the Hebrew *ch* for the very similar Hebrew *b*, 'in Adam' for 'like Adam,' and take Adam as a place, perhaps Admah (Nowack). Prof. G. A. Smith treats the difficulty heroically: 'there—he will now point out the very spots—have they dealt treacherously against me.' The spots follow.

8. Gilead was not a city, but a country: it means 'Mizpah' (Wellhausen following Ewald, cf. Judges xii. 7), and is a variant for v. 1. Pusey's suggestion, that the land of Gilead, where the two and a half tribes dwelt, may be described spiritually as a city, just as the world consists of the city of God and the city of Satan, is imaginative and beautiful, but does not commend itself to modern commentators.

9. The words are plainer in the translation than in the original. Many emendations of the text are suggested, but the meaning is not doubtful: 'the holy Shechem, one of the cities of refuge, a priests' city, full of sacred memories (Joshua xx. 7, xxi. 21, xxiv. 1, 25; 1 Kings xii. 1, 25), is a robbers' den, the priests are the robbers, the offerings are their booty.' The murder and the lewdness may be spiritual or literal, perhaps both.

10. For **house of Israel,** which is an inappropriate expression here, a slight change would make 'Beth-el' (Wellhausen). 'In another nation idolatry was error; in Israel, which had the knowledge of the one true God, and had the law, it was horror,' said one of the Fathers quoted by Pusey.

11. If this verse is to stand, and not to be rejected as a Judaean gloss, the 'harvest' must be taken *malo sensu*, a harvest of penalty (Joel iv. 13; Jer. li. 33), but the second clause referring to the return from captivity becomes unintelligible. We are probably justified therefore, with Nowack and Prof. G. A. Smith, in treating it as a later insertion, and then with Pusey we may give to it a brighter meaning. Though Judah will for the time be involved

7 When I would heal Israel, then is the iniquity of
Ephraim discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria;
for they commit falsehood: and the thief entereth in,
2 and the troop of robbers spoileth without. And they
consider not in their hearts that I remember all their
wickedness: now have their own doings beset them
3 about; they are before my face. They make the king

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in the same fate of captivity as Israel, the day will come, far off though it be, when Judah will return, and reap a harvest of spiritual blessing. Keil endeavours to get the right sense by maintaining that 'turning the captivity' does not mean the return from exile, but the escape from sin, and this can only be accomplished by bringing on Judah the harvest of punishment.

vii. **1.** The hopelessness of the people and the futility of their shallow repentance appear from this, that when Yahweh would heal them the iniquity is only further discovered. Falsehood, stealing (cf. Joel ii. 9 for the expression 'entereth in'), and highway robbery prevail on every hand.

2. Cf. v. 4. They think that God is indifferent to the sin which has ceased to shock them. They are so immersed in their evil deeds that they quite forget how clear both they and their sins are to the All-seeing eye. It is a complete picture of the callousness, the presumption, the affected piety, which leave God no alternative but to inflict the searching and awakening pains of punishment.

vii. 3-7. *The Throne itself is guilty.* The passage is difficult to connect with what has gone before and with what follows; the text also seems to be corrupt, so that the exact rendering cannot be ascertained. Wellhausen heroically corrects the text, and gets the following: 'In their knavery they anoint kings, and in their falseness princes, they are all adulterers. On the day of our king the princes were sick with wine-fever. . . . Inwardly they are like an oven, their heart burns in them, the whole night their anger sleeps, in the morning it awakes in full blaze. Altogether they glow like an oven . . . and destroy their judges: all their kings are fallen, none among them calls to me.'

Nowack is a little less drastic, as he retains the whole of verse 4 in the text. We shall do well to get the clearest sense we can out of the R. V.

3. We suppose we are in the reign of Zechariah, a witness of his revels, and of his murder at the hands of Shallum (2 Kings xv. 8-12); the fourth generation of the house of Jehu brings the

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glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their
lies. They are all adulterers; they are as an oven 4
heated by the baker; he ceaseth to stir *the fire*, from the
kneading of the dough until it be leavened. On the 5
day of our king the princes made themselves sick with
the heat of wine; he stretched out his hand with
scorners. For they have made ready their heart like an 6
oven, whiles they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the
night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire.
They are all hot as an oven, and devour their judges; all 7

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dynasty to an end, and the succession of phantom kings begins with which the Northern Kingdom comes to an end.

They make the king glad: a change in the order of two letters gives Wellhausen's 'anoint,' but the text is sense, and full of awful teaching. Zechariah was one who not only did the iniquity, but had pleasure in those who did it, the last stage of degradation (Rom. i. 32).

4. all adulterers: i. e. habitual adulterers, pausing only in the intervals of sin to prepare for a new outbreak. Hence the image of the oven; the baker leaves the fire to smoulder while the kneaded dough is being leavened. So these men, debauched with whoredom and wine, kept their vile passions dormant only for fresh stirring and flaring up, when occasion offered. The image is fairly distinct, and is completed in verse 6, where 'their baker' is their own evil will or imagination, which after a temporary rest rouses the flame of thirst and lust and murder again.

5. the day of our king: Zechariah's coronation or birthday. Prof. G. A. Smith translates 'were sick with fever from wine.' Pusey points out how Englishmen still celebrate these occasions in the same way.

he stretched out his hand. This clause Nowack pronounces hopelessly corrupt. But the phrase 'stretch or draw out one's hand,' if not found elsewhere, is yet intelligible, describing the jeering movement of a drunken man. And **scorners** is well paralleled by Prov. xx. 1, where the same Hebrew word occurs, translated 'mocker.'

6. whiles they lie in wait: this introduces the new idea of the conspiracy. Shallum is in the background nursing his murderous plan until the morning. **made ready their heart** is unfortunately not a translation of the Hebrew word, which Nowack says defies interpretation, *lit.* 'have brought near.'

7. devour their judges: evidently written in the time of

their kings are fallen: there is none among them that
8 calleth unto me. Ephraim, he mixeth himself among
9 the peoples; Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers

Menahem, the murderer of Shallum, the murderer of Zechariah (2 Kings xv. 14).

all their kings are fallen. The instability of the dynasty in the Northern Kingdom reminds one of the swift succession of the Roman Emperors after the first century. Omri was followed by a son and a grandson; Jehu had three successors in his family line. Otherwise no king did more than secure the throne to his own son. Nine kings were dethroned and murdered by their successors; eight only died natural deaths. It is curious that Hosea does not connect this disastrous record with the originally schismatic character of the Northern Kingdom and its worship: this, however, Pusey does not fail to do. Hosea rests his indictment entirely upon moral grounds. The chronicler, on the other hand, regarded the Northern Kingdom from the first as cut off from the chosen seed and the house of God.

vii. 8—x. *A People in Political Decay.* The reference to the iniquity and death on the throne leads to a series of oracles which denounce the political decay of the kingdom. The connexion between morals and politics, and the impossibility of political progress and stability without spiritual purity, are clearly shown.

8. mixeth himself. Nowack thinks the meaning cannot be extracted from this word, *lit.* 'he poureth himself over.' The word, used of mixing, e. g. the oil with the sacrificial flour, is in root the same as the supposed origin of Babel. Instead of standing aloof, as Judah did, and has done to this day, the Northern Kingdom, opening on the routes which connected great empires, got mixed with the dough of the world, and ultimately disappeared in it for ever. 'Come out and be ye separate' is the first condition of influencing the world. 'Go in and be ye mixed' is not to save the world, but to lose yourself. Ephraim escaped the reproach of Puritanism; it also perished irretrievably.

a cake not turned: a thin pancake, which, left on the heated stone of the oven, is burnt on one side and unbaked on the other. The image would cover, (1) the unequal distribution of wealth, the very rich and the very poor; (2) the separation between religious and secular, worship on Sunday, godlessness in the week; (3) the hot and cold of the frantic political relations with Assyria or Egypt; (4) the half-baked character, made up of extremes, and never harmonized.

9. Strangers. The commerce and the welcome intercourse

have devoured his strength, and he knoweth *it* not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, and he knoweth *it* not. And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: 10
yet they have not returned unto the LORD their God, nor sought him, for all this. And Ephraim is like a 11
silly dove, without understanding: they call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria. When they shall go, I will spread 12
my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven: I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard. Woe unto them! for they have wandered 13

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with the great powers like Assyria and Egypt have, unconsciously to itself, destroyed the character of the nation.

gray hairs. 'Thy gray hairs are thy passing bell,' says Pusey, referring to an Arabic proverb. The national decrepitude has stolen on unobserved.

10. the pride of Israel: cf. v. 5. Here, according to Prof. G. A. Smith, the pride testifying must mean, that though the pride of the people is humiliated by having to appeal to Assyria and Egypt, yet they do not think of returning to God. But we might keep the sense of v. 5. The extravagance and luxury of the country, in face of the desperate moral condition, were to any discerning eye the real condemnation of the people. Yet there was no repentance.

11. a silly dove: which flies hither and thither and never notices the snare. An Eastern proverb says: 'There is nothing more simple than a dove.' The Hebrew word for dove is Jonah, and would recall here the story of that prophet. In Matt. x. 16 the simplicity of a dove is commended; but that dove has fled for refuge and has found salvation and wisdom in Christ.

they call unto Egypt: see 2 Kings xv. 19, xvii. 4; also ch. v. 13, ix. 3, xii. 1. Now they appealed to Egypt for help against Assyria; now they sought to propitiate Assyria directly. The silliness lay in their never noticing that the net was cast over them in these idle negotiations, cast over them by their God, to whom they ought to have resorted.

12. my net: punishment, not mercy, though to the Christian ear to be caught in the net of God suggests mercy through punishment.

as their congregation hath heard. These words, according to Wellhausen and Nowack, are unintelligible. The LXX read a word which meant 'in hearing of their tribulation.' Our text as it stands, which might be rendered 'according to the report

from me; destruction unto them! for they have trespassed against me: though I would redeem them, yet
14 they have spoken lies against me. And they have not cried unto me with their heart, but they howl upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and wine, they
15 rebel against me. Though I have taught and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against
16 me. They return, but not to *him that is* on high; they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.

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brought to their congregation,' can only mean 'in the manner I have publicly proclaimed in Israel'—e. g. Lev. xxvi. 14; Deut. xxviii. 15.

13. lies against me. Hypocrites speak lies to God; unbelievers speak lies against Him. The former is worse; but even the latter is destruction.

14. assemble themselves. Reading two d's in the Hebrew word instead of two r's (ד for ר) as the LXX did, we get 'cut themselves.' This corresponds to the 'howl' in the first clause, and brings up the heathen scene of 1 Kings xviii. 28.

beds: the divans used in the heathen worship.

corn and wine. There is nothing of the 'heart' in their religion, only a mercenary and materialistic desire to get bread and wine: cf. ii. 9. When men worship God for what they can get, they neither get that nor God.

15. taught: exercised (Wellhausen).

16. The text is very corrupt. **to him that is on high,** cf. xi. 7. The Hebrew is three words for the ten in English (*jashubu lo al*, 'they turn not up'). Nowack here and in xi. 7 would correct *lo al* into *labbaal*, and so get 'they turn to Baal.' He thinks the idea of God being on high is later than the early prophets. But here Pusey's less critical faith seems more illuminative: 'They turn, not most High—the hearer readily filled up the broken sentence, which fell, drop by drop, from the prophet's choked heart.'

a deceitful bow: which you draw, but it does not spring back, and the arrow falls to the ground. 'God has, as it were,' says Cyril, 'bent Israel as His own bow against the tyranny of the devil and the deceits of idolatry . . ., but . . . they became as a warped bow shooting their arrows contrary.'

for the rage of their tongue. To the allusion we have no key (Prof. G. A. Smith). The word for 'rage' is that in Hab. iii. 12

Set the trumpet to thy mouth. As an eagle *he cometh* 8
against the house of the LORD: because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law.
They shall cry unto me, My God, we Israel know thee. 2
Israel hath cast off that which is good: the enemy shall 3
pursue him. They have set up kings, but not by me; 4
they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their
silver and their gold have they made them idols, that

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used of God's indignation (Ezek. xxii. 24). It may therefore be a righteous indignation, but in their predestined fall it will be futile. Among the great powers like Egypt their righteous fuming will be subject for derision. This is the last and worst of punishments; the world in which we trusted points at us the finger of scorn.

viii. **1.** Set **the trumpet:** cf. v. 8 and Amos iii. 6. For so incurable and unrepentant a people nothing remains but punishment, the invasion of a foreign host, conquest and exile. For **mouth,** *lit.* gums, see Prov. v. 3.

As an eagle. The eagle is Shalmaneser, who carried off the ten tribes, but also, thinks Pusey, points to Nebuchadnezzar who destroyed the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, and even to the Roman eagle taking Jerusalem in A. D. 70.

2. shall cry: cf. v. 15, vi. 1.

we Israel know thee: just the plea which our Lord says He will reject, Matt. vii. 22. The words of religion will not be accepted for the deeds; though the deeds may be for the words.

viii. 4–14. Prof. G. A. Smith, with equal wit and wisdom, epitomizes the paragraph, 'Artificial kings and artificial gods.' It is the punishment of a nation destroyed by wine and whoredom that it has no men in the hour of its need, but only puppets, and no God, but only idols.

4. During 253 years Israel had eighteen kings from ten different families, and no family came to a close save by violent death. The rapid succession of usurpers in the closing years was only the final plunge of a disastrous career.

of their silver and their gold, &c.: ii. 8. Hosea was the first, and it was his great and original contribution to religion, to denounce the use of images, even images of Yahweh, in worship. Amos had not yet taken that ground, nor had Elijah.

that they (*sc.* the silver and gold) **may be cut off.** The result is spoken of as the purpose. Pusey compares such a phrase as 'he goes the way to ruin himself.'

5 they may be cut off. He hath cast off thy calf, O
Samaria; mine anger is kindled against them: how long
6 will it be ere they attain to innocency? For from Israel is
even this; the workman made it, and it is no God: yea,
7 the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces. For they
sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: he
hath no standing corn; the blade shall yield no meal; if
8 so be it yield, strangers shall swallow it up. Israel is
swallowed up: now are they among the nations as a

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5. He hath cast off. Wellhausen simplifies the verse by reading 'I' for 'he.'

thy calf, O Samaria. The expression is contemptuous and derisive. The stately bull-figures at Dan and Beth-el, employed to represent Yahweh, are described as Samaria's calf! Samaria, as the capital, stands for the kingdom.

innocency. Nowack quotes Jer. xxv. 29, Exod. xxi. 28, to show that the word may mean 'freedom from punishment.' But the striking phrase of the original 'how long will they not be capable (of) innocency?' is made much tamer by Nowack's suggestion, 'how long are they unable to escape punishment?' There is a stern and awful irony in the thought of innocency being removed beyond the reach of attainment.

6. from Israel is even this, viz. the idol. Instead of Israel being from God, the god is from Israel, the handicraft of man.

broken in pieces: Wellhausen, much more literally, 'into splinters goes the calf of Samaria.' But the Hebrew word is *ἅπαξ λεγ.* Jerome did not know what it meant, but had heard that it was used for spiders' webs. If the Talmudic interpretation 'splinters' is adopted, it shows that the images in Israel were made of wood and only overlaid with silver and gold.

7. the wind: i. e. vanity, x. 13. **the whirlwind** is worse than vanity, destruction.

no standing corn: better, 'stalk it hath none.' But what '**it**' is cannot be seen. It is impossible to make the Hebrew as it stands grammatically smooth. But the idea, however terrible, is plain and striking. You sow wind, the vanity of injustice, vice, and irreligion. No stalk grows from such a sowing, nor any meal. The harvest is merely the whirlwind. Should there from all this vanity and corruption be a grain or two of good, that will be consumed by strangers in the approaching exile.

8. now. It is already accomplished in the prophet's eye.

vessel wherein is no pleasure. For they are gone up to 9
Assyria, *like* a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath
hired lovers. Yea, though they hire among the nations, 10
now will I gather them; and they begin to be minished
by reason of the burden of the king of princes. Because 11
Ephraim hath multiplied altars to sin, altars have been
unto him to sin. Though I write for him my law in ten 12

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a vessel wherein is no pleasure: 'a vessel there is no more use for' (Prof. G. A. Smith). Pusey compares 'a vessel unto dishonour,' 2 Tim. ii. 20, and quotes Orosius concerning Israel, 'like a vessel made for dishonourable offices, so they have been filled with revolting contumelies.' As the usurer and moneylender of the world, as the publican in Russia, as the speculator and financier of Western Europe, Israel is still regarded among the nations as a vessel wherein is no pleasure.

9. a wild ass: in contrast with 'the ass which knoweth his master's crib.' This wild creature of the desert, on which the lion preys (Ecclus. xiii. 19), is the embodiment of mobility, pertinacity, stubbornness, and untameableness (Gen. xvi. 12; Job xxxix. 5).

hired lovers, or perhaps 'hath given love gifts,' viz. the presents sent to secure the aid of Assyria.

10. gather them: viz. into the confinement of the exile (viii. 13, ix. 3). For the hiring of the lovers cf. ii. 16, iii. 3. The second part of the verse defies elucidation, says Nowack. But the LXX read words which differ in two letters from our text, and translated 'they shall have to cease a little from the anointing of king and princes.' The throne will perish and the feverish succession of sovereigns will end in the stillness of servitude. In the R. V. as it stands the **king of princes** must be the Assyrian king.

11. The discourse turns to the other target, the artificial gods (Prof. G. A. Smith). The multiplication of altars, intended as an act of formal piety, is a deepening of the sin, when the cultus is corrupt and the spirit of righteousness has fled. It is remarkable how a paganized Christianity marks its own degradation by the multiplication of altars in its churches.

12. This shows that the Torah (Law) was written, and voluminous, in Hosea's time. But the Torah was not only the ceremonial Law, but the moral (cf. iv. 6). So Mic. vi. 6–8. The charge is that they keep the ceremonial part, e. g. the sacrificing (verse 13), and forget the moral part. This gives us no clue as to the date of the Pentateuch.

thousand *precepts*, they are counted as a strange thing.
13 As for the sacrifices of mine offerings, they sacrifice flesh
and eat it; but the LORD accepteth them not: now will
he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins; they
14 shall return to Egypt. For Israel hath forgotten his
Maker, and builded palaces; and Judah hath multiplied
fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and
it shall devour the castles thereof.

9 Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, like the peoples; for
thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved
2 hire upon every cornfloor. The threshing-floor and the

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a strange thing: rather, 'a stranger,' who in Israel could have no voice (cf. Gen. xix. 9).

13. offerings: a word coined in the Hebrew by Hosea (Pusey). It is to express the idea that the sacrifices were the people's gifts to God. They thought they were always giving; but God regarded it in another light.

return to Egypt: cf. ii. 16, ix. 3; to repeat the bondage, and to learn by sorrow. 'As the formation, so also the re-formation, of the theocracy requires a long sojourn in the house of bondage' (Wellhausen). Some of the two tribes did go into Egypt literally, cf. Jer. xlii. 43, but the language is figurative of any captivity and bondage.

14. Modern commentators regard this verse as a later addition, perhaps borrowed from Amos. The palaces, or idol temples, are not referred to by Hosea.

thereof is feminine, and there is nothing for it to refer to. Pusey, on the other hand, accepts the verse, and refers to 2 Kings xviii. 13 for the fulfilment of the threat which came in the days of Hezekiah.

ix. 1–9. *The effects of Exile.*

1. A valuable source for characterizing the ancient cultus (Wellhausen). Threshing-floor and oil-press, corn and wine, were its motive, loud joy and shouting revel its expression. It was Dionysiac, as the Greeks would say, or as Hosea would say, heathenish. But the joy and the revelry were all to cease in the Exile. This discourse was perhaps pronounced at a harvest-festival.

hire upon every cornfloor: this is exactly parallel to ii. 6, &c. Not Yahweh, but Baalim, are the givers of the corn and wine and oil; and these are the hire of an adulterous woman. Hosea con-

winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall
fail her. They shall not dwell in the LORD's land; but 3
Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean
food in Assyria. They shall not pour out wine *offerings* 4
to the LORD, neither shall they be pleasing unto him:
their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of
mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted: for
their bread shall be for their appetite; it shall not come
into the house of the LORD. What will ye do in the day 5
of solemn assembly, and in the day of the feast of the

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trasts with the old pure Yahweh-worship, this coarse and material religion which has grown up in Canaan under the influence of **the peoples,** as he calls the old inhabitants of the land.

2. For this failure of the heathenish plenty, cf. Amos v. 11, Zeph. i. 13.

shall not feed. The Heb. does not justify this. The LXX read 'shall not know them,' and that is a better parallel with **shall fail.**

her. Israel is thought of as the adulteress.

3. All this old religion of Israel was bound up with the land, and must cease when the exiles left its borders. They could not, if they would, maintain their religion in Assyria (cf. Ezek. iv. 13). A new idea of religion was to grow out of this impossibility. There is a deep irony in the fact that the very powers whom the adulteress ogled (v. 13, vii. 11) should become the tyrannical possessors and destroyers.

4. The sacrifices were joyous feasts, accompanied by wine offerings (Exod. xxix. 38-41; Num. xxviii, xxix, also xv. 3-10).

neither shall they (viz. the sacrifices) **be pleasing unto him.** (Jer. vi. 20; Mal. iii. 4.) But as the sacrifices were to cease this sense is not appropriate. The change of one letter, *ch* for *b*, gives the appropriate sense, 'neither shall they prepare for him their sacrifice.' The word **sacrifices** is drawn into this clause from the following. A very slight change would give us: 'like the bread of sorrows shall their bread be.' For the bread at the funeral, see Jer. xvi. 7. To eat it was to be unclean for worship.

their bread shall be for their appetite. They had eaten the sacrifices for their appetite, forgetting Yahweh: now they would not be allowed to eat for anything else! There is an awful irony in this threat.

5. day of solemn assembly: sabbath, new moon, &c.; **the feast**

6 LORD? For, lo, they are gone away from destruction,
yet Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them:
their pleasant things of silver, nettles shall possess them:
7 thorns shall be in their tents. The days of visitation are
come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall
know it: the prophet is a fool, the man that hath the
spirit is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and
8 because the enmity is great. Ephraim *was* a watchman
with my God: as for the prophet, a fowler's snare is in

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of the LORD: the harvest feast. 1 Kings viii. 2, xii. 32; Judges xxi. 19; Ezek. xlv. 25.

6. from destruction: i. e. their desolated homes in Palestine. Wellhausen, by a slight change, gets 'they are gone away to Assyria.'

Memphis: the capital of Lower Egypt, near Cairo, was even then the land of ancient pyramids and mausoleums. Hosea expected an actual exile to Egypt, which did not take place, see viii. 13.

things of silver: *sc.* the silver idols. The rank grasses, nettles, and thorns, will grow where Israel dwelt and bowed down to its images: cf. Isa. xxxiv. 13.

7. days of recompence: in Heb. 'days of Shillum,' perhaps hints at Shallum with whom the anarchy began (Wellhausen): 2 Kings xv. 10.

the prophet is a fool. Nowack thinks this is the rash charge of the people against the prophet, just as in all ages the man of God seems a fool to the godless: and even Christ seemed mad to his relatives. But this is to use Hosea's obscurity as a reason for making him mean just what we wish. It is far simpler to suppose that, in the gross corruption of the times, the prophet was a false prophet and the man of the spirit was possessed in a bad sense. Amos a little later repudiated the title of prophet because it had become thus debased. This was the worst penalty of iniquity and enmity against God, that even so-called prophets deceived.

8. The difficulty of this verse has encouraged commentators to make suggestions of all kinds. But their conclusions are not much more illuminating than the plain rendering of the words as they stand, 'Watchman Ephraim with my God.' Prof. G. A. Smith takes **watchman** as 'spy' in a bad sense. Ephraim does not watch for God, but jealously and churlishly seeks for ground of complaint against him. Pusey, on the other hand, refers the words to the true prophet like Hosea, 'The watchman of Ephraim is

all his ways, *and* enmity in the house of his God. They 9
have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of
Gibeah: he will remember their iniquity, he will visit
their sins. I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; 10
I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her
first season: but they came to Baal-peor, and consecrated themselves unto the shameful thing, and became
abominable like that which they loved. As for Ephraim, 11

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with God,' i.e. a worker with Him (cf. 2 Cor. vi. 1). Either interpretation is full of difficulty. But Prof. Smith's rendering leads better to the next clause: 'the prophet (i.e. the false prophet of verse 7) is a fowler's snare on all his ways.' As Jerome says: 'On searching diligently ancient histories, I could not find that any divided the Church or seduced people from the house of Israel, except those who have been set by God as priests and prophets, i.e. watchmen.'

and **enmity:** i.e. hatred personified. The hatred condemned in the people, verse 7, is personified in the evil prophet, verse 8.

9. have deeply corrupted themselves. This is really more intelligible than Nowack's ingenious correction, to suit his own view of the verse as referring to the true prophet: 'they have made for him a deep grave.'

the days of Gibeah: cf. x. 9, Judges xix. 15, &c., for the horror of Gibeah. The tragedy of that shocking tale was that for the moment God seemed to forget, and Benjamin was victorious. But the visitation came nevertheless swift and sure.

ix. 10–17. *The corruption that is through lust.*

10. grapes in the wilderness: where from its unexpectedness the vine would be the more welcome: Deut. viii. 15.

the firstripe in the fig tree: the sweetness of which passed into a proverb: Isa. xxviii. 4; Mic. vii. 1; Jer. xxiv. 2.

The love of God to Israel in the desert made the transgression at Baal-peor the more horrible, Num. xxv. 3. That was the beginning of the shame which clung to the people in Canaan throughout, the worship of God by rites of impurity.

Baal-peor: i.e. the Baal of Peor, the Moabite god to whom Israel yoked himself while in Shittim; the name of the place was in full Beth-Baal-Peor; but in Deut. iii. 29, iv. 46, it is shortened into Beth-peor. Peor = Pisgah (Wellhausen).

abominable like that which they loved. We grow like the objects of our love. And if Baal-peor was 'the filthiest and

their glory shall fly away like a bird: there shall be no
12 birth, and none with child, and no conception. Though
they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them,
that there be not a man left: yea, woe also to them when
13 I depart from them! Ephraim, like as I have seen Tyre,
is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring
14 out his children to the slayer. Give them, O LORD;
what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb
15 and dry breasts. All their wickedness is in Gilgal; for
there I hated them: because of the wickedness of their
doings I will drive them out of mine house: I will love

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foulest of the heathen gods' (Pusey), the unhappy Israelites had become bad as bad could be.

11. The result of this moral pollution is a progressive decay of the nation. Children born would quickly die, then the womb would be the grave, at last the womb would be absolutely barren. Wellhausen remarks how much better verse 16 would come in here between 11 and 12.

12. bring up their children: this is inappropriate after verse 11, but would follow well on verse 16.

when I depart from them: 1 Sam. xxviii. 15, 16. There is then a certain point in human depravity at which God departs from men, and they rapidly plunge down into irremediable ruin. Only a prophet can with clearness indicate when that point is reached; but every religious teacher must warn men that it may be reached.

13. like as I have seen Tyre. The text here, says Nowack, defies explanation. It is quite easy, with Pusey, to say Ephraim was like Tyre in pride, glory, riches, and also in the ultimate fall. But the English rendering cannot be got out of the Hebrew words, in which there is no **like**, and **planted** is in the feminine without a feminine noun. The modern commentators seek help in the LXX, and translate: 'Ephraim's children as I have seen are appointed for capture; Ephraim must bring out his children for slaughter.' On this follows a charitable prayer.

14. With such a doom in front, better not to be born.

15. in Gilgal. The national worship (cf. iv. 15, xii. 11) is responsible for the national sin, and that for the national decay.

mine house: i.e. Palestine (viii. 1). The image of the adulteress driven from the house is before the prophet's eye: Lev. xxi. 7, 14, xxii. 13; Num. xxx. 10.

them no more; all their princes are revolters. Ephraim 16
is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit:
yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay the beloved
fruit of their womb. My God will cast them away, 17
because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall
be wanderers among the nations.

Israel is a luxuriant vine, which putteth forth his fruit: 10
according to the multitude of his fruit he hath multiplied
his altars; according to the goodness of his land they

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princes are revolters: a play on words in the Heb., *Sarehem, Sorerim*, which Prof. G. A. Smith tries to get by 'their nobles are rebels'; might we say 'their princes are prancers,' as the word is used of a refractory animal, e. g. in iv. 16?

16. The verse is as much an interposition here as it would be suitable between 11 and 12. The comparison with a tree x. 1, xiv. 8.

17. My God: the prophet's, no longer the people's (cf. v. 12). Hosea, as the first to discover that God is Love, might well use this personal pronoun, and in his own response to the Divine love he might well feel how his people's sin destroyed their power to call God theirs. This is well brought out by Prof. G. A. Smith, p. 346.

wanderers: like Cain, Gen. iv. 12–14. Pusey in a long note comments on the extraordinary fulfilment of the threat in the history of Israel.

Hosea, says Prof. G. A. Smith, was the first to thus trace out the connexion between sexual immorality and national decay. It is Hosea too who first by his preaching of repentance showed that there was redemption even from this most insidious and corrupting of vices.

Whoever preaches against impurity with Hosea's explosive power should be careful to arm himself with the call to repentance (xiv. 1, 2) and with the promise of regeneration (xiii. 14).

x. *Again 'Puppet kings and puppet gods.'*

1. Israel. In taking this fruitful land from the Canaanite, Israel had adopted also its paganism. The altars (Mizbechoth) and the pillars (Mazzeboth) are the instruments of the worship with which the corruption of religion is connected.

made goodly: i. e. carved or ornamented. They are evil, not only in despite of God's goodness, but because He is good (Pusey). It is the echo of ii. 8.

2 have made goodly pillars. Their heart is divided; now
shall they be found guilty: he shall smite their altars, he
3 shall spoil their pillars. Surely now shall they say, We
have no king: for we fear not the LORD; and the king,
4 what can he do for us? They speak *vain* words,
swearing falsely in making covenants: therefore judgement springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.
5 The inhabitants of Samaria shall be in terror for the
calves of Beth-aven: for the people thereof shall mourn
over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced over it, for
6 the glory thereof, because it is departed from it. It also

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2. divided: i. e. it is doubtful whether they are worshipping Yahweh or Baal.

be found guilty: rather, 'atone for it.'

smite their altars: *lit.* 'break the necks of,' because, says Wellhausen, images of the heads of calves were on the corners of the altars—a picturesque and searching suggestion.

3. now shall: cf. v. 7, the nearly approaching punishment.

no king: that is, as the last clause shows, though they have a king he is as good as useless. When the fear of the King of kings ceases, the king becomes a discredited and fruitless source of government.

4. The verse becomes clearer if we may follow the LXX, 'What can the king do for us?' ask the people. And the ironical answer is: 'speak words, swear falsely, make a covenant,' i. e. words, idle words, no effectual deeds. Apart from arbitrary corrections of the text, the second clause can only mean that judgement is so perverted, *sc.* in the king's mouth, that instead of being fruitful grain it is poisonous hemlock in the furrows of the field. This last expression occurs more appropriately in xii. 11.

5. the calves of Beth-aven (i. e. Beth-el, iv. 15), so far from saving the people, become an anxiety; they are carried off as spoil by the captor. This is the height of irony. Our English version glides over a number of grammatical difficulties, which can only be removed by correcting the text.

the priests: the scornful word is used which applied only to the priests of the Canaanitish cultus, *Chemarim* (2 Kings xxiii. 5; Zeph. i. 4), the word found in iv. 4 according to Prof. G. A. Smith's correction (q. v.). If we may read *jalilu* for *jagilu*, we get the more appropriate 'his priestlings shall howl over it.' The last words are a reminiscence of 1 Sam. iv. 22.

shall be carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb:
Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed
of his own counsel. *As for* Samaria, her king is cut off, 7
as foam upon the water. The high places also of Aven, 8
the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the
thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say
to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.
O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: 9
there they stood; that the battle against the children of

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6. When all other tribute is exhausted, the gold of the idol must be sent to king Pick-quarrel (cf. v. 13).

ashamed of his own counsel. By the change of one letter, ת into ב, Wellhausen gets the more intelligible 'shall be ashamed of his own idol.' But **counsel** gives a perfectly good sense, and it has the advantage of being the word in the text.

7. As Wellhausen points out, the translation accepted by the R. V. in the margin is correct. 'Samaria is cut off; her king is like (not 'foam,' which is the picturesque Rabbinical translation of a word not elsewhere found, but) a splinter on the waters,' i. e. carried away as helpless as a chip of wood in a foaming torrent.

8. The high places: cf. Amos vii. 9. Wellhausen strikes out **of Aven, the sin,** as a later Deuteronomic insertion. This is quite arbitrary. The contemptuous Aven is Beth-el, cf. iv. 15, not now House of Iniquity, but Iniquity itself, and so **the sin of Israel** is added.

Beth-el was on a hill (Joshua xvi. 1; 1 Sam. x. 3, xiii. 2; Gen. xxxv. 1; Judges i. 22; 2 Kings ii. 23).

thorn and **thistle.** This is illustrated by Gen. iii. 18, where alone this word for thistle occurs. Out of sixteen names for this class of plant, the two (*Kotz vedardan*) are combined in the original cursing of the soil, and in the exile of Israel from his promised land. The suggestion is very striking.

to the mountains, Cover us. The high places of the idolatrous worship are of use only to cover the shame of the worshippers. The idear everberates in the judgements of the N. T.: Luke xxiii. 30; Rev. vi. 16.

The blessing to Ephraim in Joseph gave a very different use of the hills: Gen. xlix. 26.

9 reverts to ix. 9. Wellhausen thinks the reference is not so much to the crime in Judges xix. 22, where Benjamin rather than Israel sinned, but to the origin of the monarchy itself in Gibeah, Saul's city (cf. xiii. 10, 11). Nowack agrees; Prof. G. A. Smith

10 iniquity should not overtake them in Gibeah. When it is my desire, I will chastise them; and the peoples shall be gathered against them, when they are bound to their
11 two transgressions. And Ephraim is an heifer that is taught, that loveth to tread out *the corn*; but I have passed over upon her fair neck: I will set a rider on Ephraim; Judah shall plow, Jacob shall break his clods.

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thinks the reference is only to Judges xix. 22 and perhaps Judges xix. 3. The latter part of the verse is unintelligible in the original, as in our version. Nowack gets a good sense by following the suggestion of P. Ruben: 'There (*sc.* at Gibeah) the sons of iniquity stood up against me: shall not war reach them in Gibeah?' Gibeah (Tell-el-Fûl) is in the southernmost part of the territory of Israel. The invading Assyrian from the north shall surely reach even that remote cradle of the iniquity of Israel.

10. The verse is difficult, and the text probably corrupt. No corrections, however, yield any better sense than the Revisers have got from it.

two transgressions. Keeping the Kethib, i.e. the text written, we may refer to Exod. xxi. 10, where the same word is used for 'duty of marriage,' i.e. conjugal cohabitation; the 'twofold cohabitation' is in keeping with the imagery of Hosea, to express the service of God and of idols. But taking the Keri (i.e. the alternative reading in the Heb. margin), we may refer either to (1) the two calves at Dan and Beth-el, or to (2) the sin of the king and that of the priest. The strange expression evokes from Pusey the wise comment: 'No slavery is so heavy as that which is self-imposed.'

11. Prof. G. A. Smith epitomizes the verse as 'the ambition of the people for spiritual results without a spiritual discipline.'

an heifer that is taught, that loveth to tread. Wellhausen and Nowack strike out **that is taught** as superfluous. But with what propriety can we accept such a judgement? The comparison is with a heifer that has been broken in, and is quite happy to tread the corn unmuzzled, as the Law required (Deut. xxv. 4), a very easy task. But God was going to pass the yoke over the heifer's neck, and in the hard discipline of the Exile to make it plough and break the clods.

Nowack boldly reads 'Israel' for 'Judah.' If we were at liberty to rewrite, as well as to interpret, the prophets, it would be a good change.

fair neck: 'kindled His relentings are': and the next verse becomes more tender still.

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap according to 12
mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to
seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon
you. Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped 13
iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: for thou didst
trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.
Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and 14
all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled

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12. righteousness and **mercy** are here synonyms.

fallow ground: it lies unbroken, thorny, and hard; no seed of righteousness in it as yet.

rain righteousness. Wellhausen and Nowack prefer the LXX, which reads *peri* for *joreh*, and so get 'that the fruit of righteousness may come to you.' But how tame compared with the exquisite image of the **righteousness** which is of God, not springing from the seed of righteousness sown, but rained down as grace from heaven! Pusey finds here an exquisite reference to Christ our righteousness sent down from heaven.

13. In contrast with the precept of verse 12 is the sorrowful fact, wickedness ploughed in instead of righteousness sown, iniquity reaped instead of mercy. And in addition the bread wrested from the furrows is the empty grist of lies. 'Bodily delights,' says St. Gregory, 'when absent kindle a vehement longing, when had and eaten they satiate and disgust the eater. Spiritual delights are distasteful when unknown; when possessed they are longed for; and the more those who hunger after them feed upon them, the more they are hungered for.'

didst trust in thy way. Wellhausen prefers the LXX reading, which gives 'chariots.' Nowack agrees, and then argues that the clause is suspect, because Israel did *not* trust in his chariots and heroes, but appealed for help to Egypt or Assyria.

Here we are thankful for Pusey's simplicity, which accepts the text as it stands, and explains: 'So long as a man distrusts his ways of sin, there is hope of his conversion amid any depths of sin. When he *trusts in his ways*, all entrance is closed against the grace of God.'

thy mighty men might refer to the military help sought in Egypt or Assyria. The appeal to these Great Powers, instead of to Him who alone is great, always rankles in the prophet's heart.

14. thy peoples (marg.): viz. the foreign powers to whom Israel has rashly appealed.

Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel. Either (1) Shalman, mentioned as a Moabite tributary of Tiglath-pileser III in a cuneiform

Beth-arbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed
15 in pieces with her children. So shall Beth-el do unto
you because of your great wickedness: at daybreak shall
the king of Israel be utterly cut off.

11 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called

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inscription. (Beth-arbel is the Galilean town Arbela, cf. 1 Macc. ix. 2, now Irbid, and we must suppose it was spoiled in the campaign mentioned 2 Kings xiii. 20; so Schrader, followed by Sayce.) Or, far more likely, (2) Shalmaneser IV, the Assyrian conqueror, is meant (2 Kings xvii. 3). Though this requires us to bring Hosea's period down later (cf. Amos vi. 2 for the campaign), or to suppose that the half-verse is a later insertion. So Wellhausen and Nowack, who think the reference to the petty princeling of Moab improbable and inconclusive. In our ignorance of the campaigns of Shalmaneser, we may suppose that he gained a victory at the Galilean town Beth-arbel; but no certainty can be gained on the point.

the mother . . . with her children should be 'on her children'; she is supposed to die trying to cover and protect them. See Gen. xxxii. 11.

15. Wellhausen corrects, according to the LXX, 'So I will do unto you, O house of Israel, &c.,' and according to his fancy, 'in storm shall the king of Israel be, &c.' But for those who feel any obligation to keep the Hebrew text as it stands the meaning will be: 'Beth-el, as the scene of the corrupt worship, has thus ruined the country; in the morning, i. e. when king Hoshea promised a better day (2 Kings xvii. 2), the kingship is cut off for ever.' But this reference to the dawning is difficult to explain, as Nowack urges. Fancy might suggest (comparing 2 Kings xix. 35) that it is a figurative description of a sudden and complete ruin. After the night of Israel's sin, one rises in the morning, and behold the king is dead.

Prof. G. A. Smith sums up the national ruin thus: the substance of the people scattered abroad; the national spirit dissipated; the national prestige humbled; the kings mere puppets; the prophets corrupted; the national vigour sapped by impurity; the idolatry conscious of its impotence.

Then the next chapter is a tender and regretful reminiscence of the love which God has shown to His ungrateful child.

xi. *The Fatherhood and Humanity of God* is Prof. G. A. Smith's beautiful title to the chapter.

1. The tenderness of this reminiscence is like the Gospel, and one cannot wonder that it is echoed in the beginning of the Gospel: Matt. ii. 15.

my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went 2
from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned
incense to graven images. Yet I taught Ephraim to go; 3
I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I
healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with 4

---

my son: cf. Exod. iv. 22, 23, 'Israel is my son.' Pusey quotes the Fathers to show that Israel was the son of God in virtue of the Son of God who from him, according to the flesh, would come. And this connexion explains the reference of Matt. ii. 15, which otherwise would seem to be merely verbal. Wellhausen and Nowack object to the reading, and prefer to reconstruct from the LXX. They and Prof. G. A. Smith follow the LXX in verse 2, with a great improvement to clearness; thus:—

2. 'out of Egypt I called him; and the more I called them, the farther they went from me.' If we are to keep our English text we can only make sense by reading into the first **they** and the second **them** the word prophets; which is certainly very forced.

The election of Israel, the tiny fugitive people, lying between the great civilized empires of Egypt and Assyria, was the mystery of grace, on which the whole religious development of the people was built, and out of which the Gospel of Jesus Christ sprang. Nor did the sins of this guilty Ephraim, nor even of faithless Judah, frustrate this election of grace.

sacrificed unto the Baalim: cf. ii. 13, xiii. 1, 2.

3. to go: i. e. in the old English sense 'to walk,' as a mother teaches the infant. The word used is Aramaic: cf. vii. 15.

I took. Yes, as Wellhausen says, the letter *a* has fallen out of the text; it must have been the first person (so LXX). This carrying of the child in the wilderness is echoed in Deut. i. 31, xxxii. 11 and Num. xi. 12; Isa. lxiii. 9.

healed: cf. Ezek. xv. 26; viz. in the childish sicknesses of the wilderness, e. g. by the brazen serpent.

4. The image changes from the child to the heifer (cf. x. 11). God led the stubborn heifer not with cords, but with love; human ties which, though the most beautiful in the world, can be resisted and broken. As Gomer resisted Hosea's tender and changeless love, so men resist the love of God.

'No man cometh unto me,' said Christ, 'except the Father *draw* him.' Augustine says: 'Do not conceive of long journeyings. When thou believest, then thou comest. For to Him who is everywhere men come by loving, not by travelling.' God loves, and so draws; when man loves, the drawing is effectual; when man refuses, the silken cords do not compel.

bands of love; and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat before them.
5 He shall not return into the land of Egypt; but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return.
6 And the sword shall fall upon his cities, and shall consume his bars, and devour *them*, because of their own
7 counsels. And my people are bent to backsliding from

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as they that take off the yoke on their jaws. The commentators give up the clause, and propose emendations. As the words stand in our version we must interpret them thus: the kindly driver of the toiling heifer lifts the yoke to ease the strain (why from the jaws we cannot explain): cf. Lev. xxvi. 13 and the parallel thought in Isa. lxiii. 13, 14.

I laid meat before them. The lifting of the yoke from the jaws liberated the mouth for eating, as a carter takes the bit out of the horse's mouth and hangs the corn-bag round his neck instead: cf. Ps. lxxviii. 24-29.

5. This quick revulsion of thought would surprise us in any one but Hosea. In him we are accustomed to it.

He shall not return: modern commentators follow the LXX and carry the *lo* (not) back into verse 4 as *lo* (to him). This makes the verse much more easy, for there is no 'but,' only 'and.' It is: 'he shall return into Egypt, and the Assyrian shall be his king.'

6. Prof. G.A. Smith surrenders the verse as a weakening and irrelevant insertion. Wellhausen and Nowack suggest emendations.

shall fall: cf. x. 14, x. 6; the meaning of the word here is not found elsewhere in Hebrew. But the idea is appropriate; and, as Pusey says, the prophecy received repeated fulfilment, even to the rage of the Zealots before the destruction of Jerusalem.

bars. This word in Jer. l. 36 is translated 'boasters' in a similar connexion. This connects much better with the words **because of their own counsels.** King Hoshea's conspiracy with So, king of Egypt, instead of delivering him from Assyria, brought him into Assyrian captivity.

7. Nowack gives up the whole verse as impossible, following Wellhausen.

are bent: *lit.* 'are hung to it,' as if backsliding were the hinge on which they turned. But the phrase is very forced. The remainder of the verse is so hopeless that even Pusey passes it by unexplained. Prof. G. A. Smith explains rather than translates: 'and though they (*sc.* the prophets) call them upwards, none of them can lift them.' In this uncertainty I would suggest that **they** refers to the 'boasters' in verse 6. Though the

me: though they call them to *him that is* on high, none
at all will exalt *him*. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? 8
how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee
as Admah? *how* shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine
heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled
together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine 9
anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am
God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee:
and I will not enter into the city. They shall walk after 10

---

boastful king and his counsellors appeal to Heaven and direct the people's thoughts to God, they will not lift up the degraded people; God has withdrawn; the religious talk is unreal:—

'The words fly up, the thoughts remain below,
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.'

8. But again the irrepressible and yearning love of God breaks out in tenderness. This (verses 8, 9) is, according to Prof. G. A. Smith, 'the greatest passage in Hosea.' Justice and mercy strive together; God determines that Israel shall be both justly punished and mercifully relieved.

deliver thee. This translation spoils the sense. It should be:—

'How am I to give thee up, O Ephraim?
How am I to let thee go, O Israel?
How give thee up, like Admah;
How make thee like Zeboim?'

Admah . . . Zeboim: cities of the plain (Deut. xxix. 22, 23). Why mention these obscurer towns instead of Sodom and Gomorrah? Is it a humbling of Israel's pride even in the expression of the Divine compassion?

compassions. The Hebrew word means rather 'consolations': cf. Deut. xxxii. 36.

9. execute the fierceness: 1 Sam. xxviii. 18.

return: the same phrase as ii. 9. It means not so much repeating the same treatment as treating the same object, i. e. 'I will not come again to Ephraim to destroy him.' The august reason for this compassion wants nothing of evangelic grandeur: cf. Num. xxiii. 19.

Holy One must, as Nowack says, have an ethical as well as a merely theological colouring: Isa. xii. 6.

I will not enter into the city. This, according to Prof. G. A. Smith, is nonsense. A very trifling change gives us: 'I am not willing to consume.'

the LORD, who shall roar like a lion: for he shall roar, and the children shall come trembling from the west.
11 They shall come trembling as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will make them to dwell in their houses, saith the LORD.
12 Ephraim compasseth me about with falsehood, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with

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Pusey, with splendid courage in defending the text as it stands, would interpret: 'God would not enter into the city, as He did into the cities of the plain, viz. to destroy it.' This is indeed heroic. The clause belongs to verse 9 in the Hebrew, and not to verse 10 as in R. V. It makes a climax.

10, 11 are not connected with what has just been said. Prof. G. A. Smith considers them an exilic insertion. The exiles are to return from the west, and the south (Egypt), and the north (Assyria). This certainly sounds more appropriate from a writer in the Exile than from a pre-exilic prophet. But whether Hosea's or no, the words and the promise are alike exquisite.

like a lion: cf. Amos iii. 8. So Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. v. 5). No sound is more awe-inspiring than the lion's roar; and when God utters His voice, not only do His foes tremble, but His ransomed children are filled with awe; they return unto Him with fearfulness, and contrition, and wonder.

11. dove: common in Palestine, proverbial for its swiftness of flight and its timidity; it flew faster when it was frightened (Ps. lv. 6, 7; Isa. lx. 8). It returned to its own cot from any distance to which it was carried.

12 belongs in the Hebrew, and in the sense, to **ch. xii.**

xii, xiii. *The Final Argument, going back upon the history of Israel to explain the backsliding, calling to, and yet despairing of, repentance, ends in a more hopeless doom than ever.*

xii. *The People and their Father Jacob.*

xi. **12. falsehood.** Jacob was from the first a deceiver and a transplanter. The deceit of Ephraim lay in the tortuous dealings with Assyria and Egypt, and in the abominations of the cultus.

but Judah. We are certainly tempted here to accept the view that the reference to Judah is a later interpolation. The Hebrew, very difficult to render, may mean, as the margin shows, precisely opposite things, either a commendation of Judah's faithfulness or a condemnation of Judah's fall.

Perhaps original words of Hosea's were altered by a later Judaean writer. The adverse rendering in the margin, 'and

God, and is faithful with the Holy One. Ephraim 12
feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he
continually multiplieth lies and desolation; and they
make a covenant with Assyria, and oil is carried into
Egypt. The Lord hath also a controversy with Judah, 2
and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according
to his doings will he recompense him. In the womb he 3
took his brother by the heel; and in his manhood he

Judah is yet unstedfast with God, and with the Holy One who is faithful,' is approved by Ewald, Hitzig, Wünsche, &c.: cf. vi. 4. Nowack alters a word, and gets: 'Judah is yet trusted with God and true to the Holy One.'

Holy One: a word, like Elohim, in the plural, in later Hebrew used for '*God*' (Prov. ix. 10, xxx. 3); 'its use,' says Pusey, 'is founded on the mystery of the Trinity.' Wellhausen adopts Cornill's bold conjecture, and reads *Qedeshim* instead of *Qedushim*, and changes the last word; 'profanes himself with Qedeshim' (cf. Num. xxv. 3, 5), i. e. the Sodomite priests of the Baal-worship. But this is too ingenious.

xii. **1.** The **wind** and the **east wind** represent the foreign alliances, which are vanity and worse; for while the wind is unsubstantial, the Sirocco, or south-east wind of Palestine, is parching and withering, destructive to vegetation, unwholesome to man and beast, and in its whirling force often a hurricane of ruin (cf. Job xxvii. 21; Jer. xviii. 17).

desolation: *shod*, but LXX reads *shav*, 'fraud.'

oil, as the chief product of Palestine, stands for all the wealth which king Hoshea sent into Egypt to secure the help of So (cf. Isa. xxx. 6, 7). It will be remembered that Hoshea first became tributary to Shalmaneser of Assyria, and then sought the help of Egypt to rebel against him. This windy policy is not only lies, but desolation: 2 Kings xvii. 4.

2. Judah. This sudden intrusion of Judah is so destructive of the sense that modern commentators unhesitatingly take it as a slip for Israel. The LXX omits the 'and,' and if we may follow that reading we have a clear sense: 'Yahweh has a controversy with Israel, to visit on Jacob according to his ways.' The need to keep Israel in verse 2 is emphasized by verse 3. Hosea, as Wellhausen remarks, shows a knowledge of the history of Jacob, as recorded in the Yahwist-narrative of Genesis.

To move Ephraim to repentance the prophet recalls the election, the faith, the power, of the Patriarch Israel.

took his brother by the heel: Gen. xxv. 26 (cf. xxvii. 36).

4 had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him at Beth-el, and there he spake with
5 us; even the LORD, the God of hosts; the LORD is his
6 memorial. Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgement, and wait on thy God continually.

The Hebrew word is *'aqab*, the presumable root of *Ja-'aqab* (Jacob), just as **had power with God** is *sarah eth Elohim*, the presumable origin of *Yisra'el* (Israel): Gen. xxxii. 28. Nowack confuses the whole passage by not allowing that verses 3–5 are intended to describe the virtues and valour of Jacob.

4. The scene at Peniel (Gen. xxxii. 29) is put before the scene at Beth-el (Gen. xxviii. 19) and the flight to Aram (verse 12).

wept, not mentioned in Genesis; but, as Pusey says, tears and entreaties are closely allied, 'implorare est fletu rogare'; cf. French *implorer*, *pleurer*.

with us: Wellhausen reads 'him' for 'us'; but it is more striking to say that in speaking with Israel the Patriarch God spoke with His descendants too.

5. the LORD: i.e. Yahweh, the name given in Exod. iii. 14, 15.

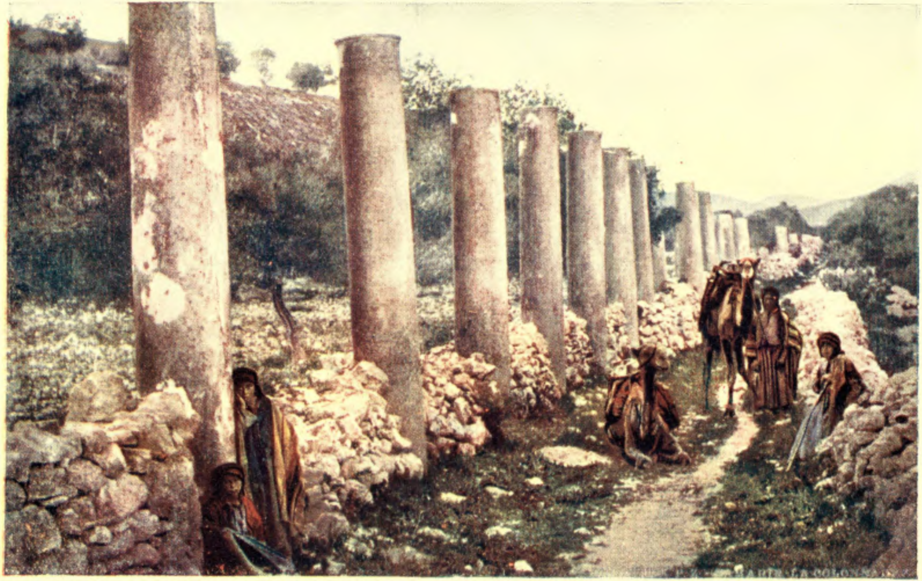
is his memorial. This name of revelation we best honour by keeping the Hebrew four letters as near as possible, viz. *Y-h-v-h*. But the vowel-points which turn it into 'Jehovah' are those of 'Adonai' (Lord), the word read by the Rabbis in place of the sacred 'Tetragrammaton.' The pronunciation Yahweh probably expresses the meaning of the word, which is the third person singular of the verb 'to be,' whether in a neuter or in a causative sense. The 'memorial' asserts for ever the self-existence of the Being who is the Author of all existence.

On the great Day of Atonement the high priest pronounced the name ten times, and all the people fell on their faces, saying, 'Blessed be the glorious name of His kingdom for ever and ever.' But it is said after 322 B.C., the time of Simeon the Just, the high priests disused it, for fear that its sanctity should be violated. Even by their reverence the chosen people violated the purpose of God.

6. This mention of the sacred name, combined with the example of the Patriarch, is a strong plea to deceitful and deceived Ephraim to return.

to thy God: it is 'through' or 'by' thy God. For the moment repentance is thought of, not as returning to God, but as returning to righteousness by His aid.

keep mercy and judgement. Like Mic. vi. 8 the prophet



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COLONNADE AT SAMARIA (Time of Herod)

He is a trafficker, the balances of deceit are in his 7
hand: he loveth to oppress. And Ephraim said, Surely 8
I am become rich, I have found me wealth: in all my
labours they shall find in me none iniquity that were sin.
But I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt; 9
I will yet again make thee to dwell in tents, as in the

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dwells on the duties to men, because, says Pusey, men cannot deceive themselves so easily about their duties to their neighbour as about their duties to God.

Nowack, having made the passage obscure by his arbitrary renderings, proposes to strike out 3^b–6 as a later interpolation.

7. From the call to repentance Hosea characteristically returns to renew his sharp reproaches for present iniquity. 'Canaan,' he suddenly cries. So the old inhabitant of the land was called, meaning 'trafficker' (Zeph. i. 11). So the prophet calls degenerate Ephraim. For the false balances, see Amos ii. 6, viii. 5.

oppress: better, 'defraud'; cf. Mic. ii. 2. The Phoenicians, or Canaanites, were in Homer infamous for their greed; they were called 'gnawers' and 'money-lovers' (*Od.* xiv. 283, xv. 413). For this opprobrious connexion of Israel with Canaan, see Ezek. xvi. 3: 'Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of the Canaanite; the Amorite was thy father, and thy mother was an Hittite.'

8. Ephraim's defence: 'I did not wish to do wrong; that were sin! I only wished to get rich.' He did not know that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. It is not necessary, with Wellhausen, following the LXX, to break off the second clause, making it the prophet's reply to Ephraim's defence: 'all his gain does not suffice for the guilt which he has contracted.'

9. The tent-life of the wilderness was a trial and pain, for which the settlement in the promised land was readily exchanged. But it was also a blessing and a revelation, a walking in mystery and wonder, the Divine presence always felt and often manifest. The Feast of Tabernacles was the yearly remembrance of this wonderful pilgrim experience (Lev. xxiii. 39–43; Neh. viii. 14–18). Pusey appositely quotes a Jewish writer: 'Whoso begins to think himself a citizen in this world, and not a foreigner, him God biddeth, leaving his ordinary dwelling, to remove into a temporary lodging, in order that, leaving these thoughts, he may learn to acknowledge that he is only a stranger in this world and not a citizen, in that he dwells as in a stranger's hut, and so should not attribute too much to the shadow of his beams, but dwell under the shadow of the Almighty.' This verse, therefore, is a threat or a promise according to the insight with which it is examined. The 'dwelling in tents' in the Exile of Babylon was

10 days of the solemn feast. I have also spoken unto the prophets, and I have multiplied visions; and by the
11 ministry of the prophets have I used similitudes. Is Gilead iniquity? they are altogether vanity; in Gilgal they sacrifice bullocks: yea, their altars are as heaps in
12 the furrows of the field. And Jacob fled into the field of Aram, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he

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a blessing: there Yahweh found His people again as in the wilderness (ii. 14). Through missing this spiritual connexion Nowack denies that the **solemn feast** could be the Feast of Tabernacles, 'a feast of unbridled joy.' He thinks also the connexion of this feast with the desert-journey of the Exodus was only invented in the Exile, and by the Priestly Code writers. He changes the word into 'in the days of the foretime.'

10. As God in His pleading spoke by the wilderness experience—and will do again in the Exile—so He used, and will use, prophets, giving them visions, and commanding such similitudes as Hosea's relation with Gomer.

I do not say that this connexion is certain; but Wellhausen says that no satisfactory explanation of the verse can be given.

11. This verse is still more perplexing, and commentators give up hope of tracing its connexion with the foregoing or following. All we can do is to interpret the verse by itself. It is an echo of vi. 8, when Gilead is a centre of the debased cultus.

they are altogether vanity: who are meant is not said; the text seems very obscure. Still, we can force a sense: 'If Gilead has become iniquity, they (the Gileadites) have become vanity, i.e. nothingness.'

Gilgal represents the west as Gilead the east of Jordan. The word 'heaps' (Heb. *Gallim*) is a play on the word *Gil-gal*, which meant a stone circle erected for primitive worship. It is not clear why the common sacrifice of bullocks should be reprehended. Hitzig changed the word *shevarim* into *lashshedim*, and translated 'sacrificed to demons' (Deut. xxxii. 17; Ps. cvi. 37).

as heaps: like the ruins of Stonehenge, a wonder and a reproach of idolatry in the eyes of those who come after: cf. x. 4.

12. We return to the illustrative and didactic history of the Patriarch. In the connexion of the chapter, Jacob's journey to the east, and the return with a beloved wife and two bands, must be a gleam of encouragement to the guilty nation which is to go into the desert and dwell in tents again.

field of Aram: Deut. xxvi. 5; cf. Gen. xxxvi. 35, 'field of Moab.' Aram is Syria, Mesopotamia, Gen. xxviii. 5.

kept *sheep*. And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel 13
up out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.
Ephraim hath provoked to anger most bitterly: therefore 14
shall his blood be left upon him, and his reproach shall
his Lord return unto him.

When Ephraim spake, there was trembling; he exalted **13**
himself in Israel: but when he offended in Baal, he died.
And now they sin more and more, and have made them 2

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kept: 'sheep' is not expressed; Gen. xxix. 20, 28. By the analogy of Arabic it may mean 'kept watch' (Wellhausen).

13. A new echo of verse 10. Another gleam of hope in coming punishment. God does not leave His oppressed people in Egypt; Moses is raised up. Perhaps He will not leave them in exile. Will an Ezekiel, a second Isaiah, a Daniel, nay, a Cyrus-Messiah, be raised up to restore them?

14. The clouds close again and hide the gleam, in Hosea's rapid way. To the charge of deceit in verse 7, and the implied charge of idolatry in verse 11, is added the third of the damnatory triad, the bloodshed: see 2 Kings xvii. 17. For the threat which follows, cf. Isa. lxv. 7. Prof. G. A. Smith says: 'I cannot trace the argument here'; and Wellhausen says: 'the sense is half-intelligible, the text from **bitterly** to **upon him** totally corrupt.' We must be content, therefore, if our understanding of this difficult chapter remains obscure.

xiii. *The Last Judgement of Israel.* We have here a clear recapitulation of all Hosea's threats, to be followed in one final chapter by a desperate call to repentance.

1. When Ephraim spake. Wellhausen seeks for a historic occasion. But the verse is rather a *résumé* of the history of the Northern Kingdom. Accepting the rather doubtful translation of the first clause, we may quote Bp. Hall: 'Ephraim was once very aweful, so as, while he spake, the rest of the tribes were ready to tremble.' It can hardly refer to Joshua, who belonged to that tribe (Pusey), but it sums up the martial glories of Israel under Ahab and Jehu.

exalted himself (Amos vi. 13), a slight change makes this 'Prince was he in Israel.'

offended in Baal: 1 Kings xvi. 31.

died: spiritually.

2. This polemic against the images used in the worship of Yahweh is the seed of the great harvest in Isa. 40–44.

molten images of their silver, even idols according to their own understanding, all of them the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice
3 kiss the calves. Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the dew that passeth early away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the threshing-floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.
4 Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt; and thou shalt know no god but me, and beside me there

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according to their own understanding, or 'image' (as LXX reads).

they say of them. Wellhausen and Prof. G. A. Smith, 'they speak to them,' *sc.* deaf and dumb images, as if they could hear.

Then the sentence **the men that sacrifice kiss the calves** becomes an outbreak of scorn like 1 Kings xix. 18. The marginal reading, 'the sacrificers of men,' might be taken literally (Mic. vi. 7). But the sin of human sacrifice is, as Wellhausen says, too great and shocking an offence to be introduced in a way so casual and even derisive. And the translation of the Hebrew words, 'sacrificers of men' as 'sacrificing men' is justified by a similar phrase in Mic. v. 4, *nesike-adam*, and in Gen. xvi. 12, *pere-adam*.

Kissing was an act of homage in the East, on hand or foot, knee or shoulder, and a token of divine honour to idol (1 Kings xix. 18) or God (Ps. ii. 12). Kissing the hand to the moon is worship in Job xxxi. 26, 27.

3 echoes vi. 4. The last clause is our authority for showing that the Hebrews had chimneys in the roof (Wellhausen). Pusey remarks that the morning cloud and the dew well signify the bright but brief prosperity under Jeroboam II. 'Bright and glistening with light is the early dew; in an hour it is gone as if it had never been. Glowing and gilded by the sun is the morning cloud; while you admire its beauty its hues have vanished.' In the image of the chaff, the whirlwind, in place of the winnowing wind, indicates the violence of the removal from their land: cf. iv. 19, viii. 7. The chaff, Ps. i. 4; Isa. xvii. 13, xli. 15.

4. This is a blast from the trumpet of Sinai: Exod. xx. 2, 3. When God in Christ was recognized as the Saviour: the language was used of Christ: Acts iv. 12. It is not enough to recognize God as Saviour; He must be recognized as the only Saviour. To admit any power even beside Him is to introduce an idol, another God (Pusey). The LXX inserts here a passage like those

is no saviour. I did know thee in the wilderness, in the 5
land of great drought. According to their pasture, so 6
were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was
exalted: therefore have they forgotten me. Therefore 7
am I unto them as a lion: as a leopard will I watch by
the way: I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of 8
her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart: and
there will I devour them like a lion; the wild beast shall
tear them. It is thy destruction, O Israel, that *thou art* 9

---

in Amos iv. 13, v. 8, 9, ix. 5, 6, very fine, as a contrast to the morning cloud, the dew, the chaff, and the smoke: 'I am the Lord thy God who establishes the heaven and founds the earth, whose hands founded all the host of heaven, and I did not show them to thee to walk after them.'

5. I did know thee: Deut. ii. 7; Amos iii. 2. Wellhausen suggests the change of a *d* into *r*, i.e. in Heb. ד into ר, which gives 'I pastured thee' instead of 'I knew thee,' and then the pasturing in verse 6 is more natural.

6. If we might read with Nowack *chirotham* it would be simpler, 'as they pastured, they were filled.' Assuming Deuteronomy to be later than Hosea, it is remarkable how the prophet's language had penetrated the national conscience: cf. Deut. vi. 11, 12, viii. 11-17, xxxii. 15, 18.

7-9. The Lord our help turned to be our destroyer! The fierceness of the lion, the swiftness of the leopard, the savageness of the bear—such are the qualities of an avenging God.

7. 'as a leopard on the way to Assyria.' The Hebrew word *Ashur* might be a verb as our translators took it, 'I will watch,' or, as Prof. G. A. Smith, 'I will leap'; but it means with different vowel points 'Assyria,' and the LXX so took it. And, as Wellhausen says, this is required to justify **there** in verse 8.

For the use of animals in such imagery, see vii. 11, 12 and v. 12, 14.

8. The Syrian bear is ferocious to an enemy, tender and self-sacrificing for her young: cf. 2 Sam. xvii. 8.

the caul of their heart: the lion is said to go instinctively straight to the heart of its prey, tear it out and suck the blood. This fearful threat, the only way by which God could get at the hard and callous heart of Ephraim, was carried out. In 734 the Assyrians had depopulated Gilead and Galilee; in 725 the capital was invested; and by 721 the whole population was carried into captivity.

10 against me, against thy help. Where now is thy king,
that he may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges,
of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?
11 I have given thee a king in mine anger, and have taken
12 him away in my wrath. The iniquity of Ephraim is
13 bound up; his sin is laid up in store. The sorrows of
a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an
unwise son; for it is time he should not tarry in the

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9. Yet this ruin of a nation was brought on by itself. The margin reveals how difficult it is to translate the five words of which the verse is composed. Prof. G. A. Smith goes to the LXX, and renders: 'When he has destroyed thee, O Israel, who will help thee?' I wish it were possible to take our R. V. as the real translation. The words are: 'Thy destruction, Israel, that in (against) me, in (against) thy help.' But it is obvious that neither A. V. nor R. V. does more than guess. It is one of the passages which it is better to let alone; for to get meaning out of it is only to read into it what we wish.

10. This goes back to the mixed origin of the kingship in 1 Sam. viii. 19. But its special application is to the broken line of usurpers and idolaters which had occupied the Northern throne.

in all thy cities. Though this gives sense, Houtsma's very slight changes give a much better sense, and must be considered brilliant as a conjecture. 'Where is then thy king that he may help thee, and all thy princes that they may judge thee; of whom thou saidst, Give me kings and princes.'

11. Pusey has innumerable quotations from the Fathers to show how a wrong prayer is better unanswered; to answer it is to send punishment and dole. But the statement of the verse is historical rather than ethical. Jeroboam was given in anger, when the ten tribes broke from Rehoboam, and Hoshea, the last king, was taken away in anger, when the iniquity of Ephraim had yielded its full harvest and was stored in the barn of God.

12. In Deut. xxxii. 34, 35 we have the echo of this. In Rom. ii. 4-6 is another echo. This image of accumulating guilt, and the heart hardening because the punishment is delayed (cf. Eccles. viii. 11), sums up what has gone before.

13. The image is shifting. The travail of the woman is mentioned to illustrate the suddenness of the punishment which is to fall on Ephraim; but that suggests the folly of Ephraim, the child that ought to be born, but is, like Matthew Arnold's description of the age, 'powerless to be born.' As there is no

place of the breaking forth of children. I will ransom 14
them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them
from death: O death, where are thy plagues? O grave,
where is thy destruction? repentance shall be hid from
mine eyes. Though he be fruitful among his brethren, 15
an east wind shall come, the breath of the LORD coming

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real repentance there can be no real birth: 2 Kings xix. 3. But for him to stop in the mouth of the womb means death for mother and child. It is high time for him to come forth. He does not. Therefore comes death.

14. It would be beautiful to take this as a sudden promise of mercy breaking in at that dark moment when the stillborn child and travailing mother perished in the hopeless Exile. Such a promise of resurrection accords with Isaiah and Ezekiel. Such a rendering is approved by Ewald and Hitzig, and adopted by our own version. And Paul must have read the great words so in quoting them for his doctrine of resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 55. Pusey quotes Jewish interpreters who favour this view, e. g. 'I went with the angel Kippod, and Messiah son of David went with me, until I came to the gates of hell. When the prisoners of hell saw the light of the Messiah, they wished to receive him, saying, This is he who will bring us out of this darkness, as it is written, "I will redeem them from the hand of hell."' And with such authorities many may be content to err. But the word translated 'repentance' is really 'pity.' And this, together with the context, shuts us up to the view which Wellhausen, Nowack, and Prof. G. A. Smith support. The verse is a threat of implacable doom. 'Shall I ransom them from the hand of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from death? Where are thy plagues, O death? Where is thy destruction, Sheol? (i. e. bring forth the plagues and destruction for the guilty people). Pity shall be hid from my eyes.' It is the misfortune of the brevity of Hebrew diction, at its emotional heights, that a sentence can be a statement or an interrogative, and thus the meaning may be positive or negative.

15 states the exact form of the doom just announced; the actual calamity which would come twelve years later.

Though he be fruitful: *Yaphri*—which is the meaning of the name Ephraim.

among his brethren. It is tempting to read in the Hebrew 'reed-grass' for 'brethren,' as this is so suitable to the image of the tree planted by the water (Ps. i. 3), withered by the pitiless Sirocco.

up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the
16 treasure of all pleasant vessels. Samaria shall bear her guilt; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword; their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.

14 O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou

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he shall spoil: i. e. the enemy, the Assyrian, symbolized by the east wind.

16. First **she,** then **they,** and lastly **their women with child,** are an extraordinary variation of number and gender. Nowack thinks the last phrase may be an insertion from the all-too-familiar atrocities of ancient warfare. Cf. x. 14; 2 Kings viii. 12, xv. 16; Ps. cxxxvii. 9; Amos i. 13; Nahum iii. 10; Isa. xiii. 16.

This prophesied desolation of Samaria is most curious to trace. Re-peopled by heathen (2 Kings xvii. 24), destroyed by John Hyrcanus (Jos. *Ant.* xiii. 10, 3), fortified by Herod (Jos. *Ant.* xiv. 4, 4 and 5, 3) and called Sebaste, after Augustus (Sebastos), showing on a coin of Nero found on the site the image it is thought of the old Ashtoreth, the traditional burying-place of John Baptist, rifled by Julian, then the see of a Christian bishopric, now known as Sebastieh, it offers no trace for ever of the powerful throne which once flourished there, or of the guilty people who there filled up the measure of their iniquities.

xiv. *Over the stormy waters of Judgement expands the bow of Mercy.* Cheyne (Introduction to Robertson Smith's *The Prophets of Israel*) says that the passage belongs to a later prophet, and is replete with the imagery and thought of such passages as Jer. xxxi. 10–20. And after the final doom pronounced in ch. xiii it is certainly difficult to explain this exquisite call to repentance and promise of pardon. But it must be remembered that this paradoxical mingling of mercy and judgement is the peculiar characteristic of Hosea. It is the note struck in ch. ii which interprets the experience of the prophet with his erring wife (especially verses 14 ff.). And though we cannot explain the amazing revulsion in this passage, and though it is not justified by anything in the later history of Ephraim and the Northern Kingdom, we may admit, with Prof. G. A. Smith, that it is a genuine oracle of Hosea's, even if it is to be inserted in the body of the book rather than put at the close.

All difficulties apart, we should surrender ourselves to the beauty and the glory of this message from the heart of God. Whether it is Hosea's or not, it is God's; whether it harmonizes

hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and 2
return unto the LORD: say unto him, Take away all
iniquity, and accept that which is good: so will we
render *as* bullocks *the offering of* our lips. Asshur shall 3
not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will
we say any more to the work of our hands, *Ye are* our

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with the doom of ch. xiii or not, it is in perfect accord with the Gospel which we know, and with the God who will not have any to perish, the God who so loved the world, the God who in Christ receives sinners and calls them to repentance. The chapter rises above all national and temporal considerations, and carries us up to the eternal Cross and the eternal Saviour, calling men to repentance.

1. unto the LORD. The preposition, as Pusey says, implies 'quite up to' Him. To see that we have fallen by our own iniquity is the beginning of true repentance. Cf. vi. 1, xii. 6, also iii. 5.

fallen by thine iniquity: cf. xiii. 9.

2. words: in contrast to the meaningless dumb ritual. 'So, at the Reformation, in place of the frozen ritualism of the Church there broke forth, as though it were birds in Springtime, a great burst of hymns and prayers, with the clear notes of the Gospel in the common tongue. So intolerable was the memory of what has been, that it was even enacted that henceforth no sacrament should be dispensed but the Word should be given to the people along with it' (Prof. G. A. Smith, p. 343). Pusey agrees with this interpretation. Ritualist and Presbyterian both know that ritualism without living and true words is dead.

that which is good. 'What good had they to offer?' asks Pusey. The answer must be, a heart-repentance in place of the idle and hypocritical sacrifices.

bullocks . . . our lips. This does not, as Nowack says, defy elucidation. Nor is it necessary to read with the LXX and the Syriac, 'fruit from our lips.' However strong the expression is, it is quite clear. Words take the place of formal offerings, therefore lips take the place of the costly bullocks that were offered. Ps. lxix. 30, 31 is an exact comment on it: cf. also Pss. l. 13, 14, li. 19; Heb. xiii. 15.

3. The delusive trust in Assyria and Egypt which the prophet had so often reprehended (v. 13), and the images used in worship, are laid aside. The return is to God Himself, the true help.

horses: *sc.* from Egypt (1 Kings x. 28). See Isa. xxx. 2–16, xxxi. 1; Ezek. xvii. 15.

4 gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. I will
heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine
5 anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew
unto Israel: he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth
6 his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and

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the fatherless: cf. Ps. x. 14. The people, deserted by human helpers, think of the Father, and find God's fatherhood as the prodigal did. The thought goes back to ii. 23.

4-**6.** *God's reply to the words of penitence and trust.*

4. their . . . him. Israel thought of now individually, now collectively.

love them freely: cf. xi. 1. How does He heal backsliding? by the grace of love, and by a free forgiveness. This is the Gospel as Paul preached it.

5. In contrast with the blighted tree of xiii. 15 Israel is now to be a flower, a tree, nay, a pine-clad mountain, with unfailing springs.

dew (cf. vi. 3) falling every morning, in contrast with xiii. 3, where it denotes instability.

the lily: the image of fruitfulness: cf. Isa. xxvii. 6 (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, xxi. 5); it multiplies rapidly, but is weak in the root and soon fades. A new image is therefore added.

roots as Lebanon. Wellhausen and Nowack would expect a plant, not a mountain, and try to change the text accordingly. They question whether 'strike roots' is a Hebrew phrase. But the whole beauty of the promise lies in the paraprosdokian; you expect 'he shall cast forth his roots like an oak or a cedar,' but instead of this comes 'like Lebanon,' that great Mount Hermon in the Anti-Libanus, which, as Prof. G. A. Smith says, dominates all Hosea's land, the snow-peak which gathers the clouds and devolves the streams, which rests the eyes of weary travellers in the unwholesome plain, and lifts up the hearts of pilgrims to the heavens. Sixty miles away, in the Jebel Druze, the amphitheatres were arranged that Hermon might fill the horizon of the spectators. To be therefore like this deep-rooted, steadfast, far-seen, and much-loved mountain were better than to be like the fairest of its flowers and the stateliest of its trees: cf. Ps. xcii. 12; Isa. xxxv. 2.

6. And yet Israel shall be like a tree too, one of the cedars on Lebanon, with its spreading branches. Wellhausen says the use of the two words for 'roots' (*Sharash*) and 'branches' (*Jonkoth*) is late; but whenever the words were written, they are of thrilling spiritual beauty.

his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as
Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall 7
return; they shall revive *as* the corn, and blossom as
the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of
Lebanon. Ephraim *shall say*, What have I to do any 8
more with idols? I have answered, and will regard him:
I am like a green fir tree; from me is thy fruit found.

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the olive tree, which bears its silver-grey foliage winter and summer (Ps. lii. 8; Jer. xi. 16), a beautiful symbol of the unfailing grace of God.

smell as Lebanon: clear mountain air scented with pines. The lower slopes of Lebanon are clothed also with aromatic shrubs, myrtles, lavender, and fragrant reeds. 'As you enter the valley (between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon),' says R. Tauchum, 'straightway the scent meets you.'

7. Now the prophet speaks. 'They shall return and sit under His (*sc.* God's) shadow,' so by a very slight change Wellhausen, Nowack, *et al.*, following LXX: cf. Ezek. xxxi. 6.

revive as the corn: the 'as' is not in the Hebrew. Pusey sees the mystical meaning: they will be the bread and wine, the body of Christ. This is surely better than re-writing the passage, as Prof. G. A. Smith does: 'They shall live well watered as a garden, till they flourish like the vine.'

the scent thereof: the margin 'his memorial' is right.

wine of Lebanon. Pusey says the grapes of Lebanon are as large as plums, and the wine is the best in the world. He quotes Œdmann, ii. 193. Nowack ignores this, and questions whether such northerly wine could be good. Formerly Israel was a luxuriant but empty vine (x. 1; cf. Isa. v. 2). But the new vine of prophecy is Christ. Branches in that vine bear fruit.

8. It will be noted that 'shall say' is not in the original. Perhaps the marginal rendering can stand. And then the whole verse may read as God's last word to His repentant and restored people. The difficulties, as the commentators see, are great; but it is well, if possible, to take the text just as it stands.

Ephraim (says Yahweh), **what have I to do any more with idols?** (i. e. God looks at His people and sees no more any strange god among them.) **I have answered** (cf. ii. 21) **and will regard him.** (It would of course be easier if it were 'will regard thee.') **I am like a green fir tree.** (It is unusual to compare God with a tree, especially when the whole imagery has made Ephraim the tree hitherto; but we may support the rendering with Cant.

9 Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them; but transgressors shall fall therein.

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ii. 3 as well as with verse 7.) **From me is thy fruit found.** (Cf. ii. 8, 23; John xv. 4, 5.)

The alternative is to make a little dialogue of the verse. Ephraim: 'What have I to do with idols?' God: 'I have answered, and will regard him.' Ephraim: 'I am like a green fir-tree.' God: 'From me is thy fruit found.' Even this forced ingenuity is better than Wellhausen's extraordinary re-shaping of the text to make 'I have answered and will regard him' into 'I am his Anat and his Aschera,' i. e. I take the place of his idols.

In justification of comparing God with the Berosh (fir, or rather cypress), we may quote what Pusey says of this tree in the Lebanon: 'It is a tall stately tree (Isa. lv. 13), in whose branches the stork could make its nest (Ps. civ. 17); its wood precious enough to be employed in the temple (1 Kings v. 8, 10, vi. 15, 34), fine enough to be used in all sorts of musical instruments (2 Sam. vi. 5), strong and pliant enough to be used for spears (Nahum ii. 3). It was part of the glory of Lebanon (Isa. xxxvii. 24, lx. 13). A traveller says: Each tree is in itself a study for the landscape-painter—some on account of their enormous stems and branches. Would you see trees in all their splendour and beauty? then enter these wild groves, that have never been touched by the pruning-knife of art.'

If therefore among His works anything may be used as a symbol of Him, Hosea is justified in putting into God's mouth, 'I am like a green fir tree.'

9. This, whether Hosea's own final word or the comment of a later reader (Wellhausen, Prof. G. A. Smith, Nowack), is a fit ending to such a tale of mingled judgement and mercy as the prophet has unfolded.

wise: cf. Ps. cvii. 43, lxxiii. 16, 17; Jer. ix. 12; Dan. xii. 10; John viii. 47, xviii. 37.

the ways of the LORD: cf. Deut. xxxii. 4; Job xxvi. 14, xxxvi. 23; Ps. xviii. 30, lxxvii. 19, cxlv. 17; Dan. iv. 37.

transgressors fall: Prov. x. 29, xi. 5, xv. 9. The stumbling in the way of revelation is a mystery occurring even to this day Ps. lxix. 22; Luke ii. 34; John ix. 39, and especially 1 Cor. i. 23, 24; 2 Cor. ii. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8.

JOEL

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

JOEL

INTRODUCTION

To determine the date and appreciate the message of this brief but beautiful little book, let us glance at Nowack's invaluable synopsis. The prophecy of Joel arises out of a great devastation, brought on the land by locusts, and apparently repeated for several successive years (ii. 25). To the description of this devastation (i. 2–12) is attached the exhortation to the priests to clothe themselves in mourning and to fast, also to summon the people to a great penitential gathering in the temple, in order to call upon Yahweh there. The calamity is before the eyes of all, and the exhortation appeals to the obvious facts (i. 13–20). This gathering is to be held on Zion, for in these locusts the prophet sees the foreshadowing of the day of Yahweh, which is near at hand. They are Yahweh's host, the fulfillers of His will, which press unceasingly forwards (ii. 1–11). Therefore must the Jews return to Yahweh and offer a genuine penitence; the priests must prescribe a fast, and call a gathering to Zion, and there between the outer court and the altar call upon Yahweh. Perhaps Yahweh will have mercy and repent of the evil, for He is gracious and merciful, patient and of great goodness (ii. 12–17).

Yahweh allowed Himself to be entreated; the zeal for His people revived; the locusts were annihilated; Yahweh blessed the land again with fruitfulness, and so restored to the people what had been taken away in the foregoing years (ii. 18–27).

But this blessing in nature is only the prelude to greater things which will happen. After this Yahweh pours out

His Spirit on the whole people; signs in heaven and on earth announce the coming in of Yahweh's day; there is for all who know Him deliverance on Zion (ii. 28–32). Then Yahweh will gather all nations, and reckon with them for all the evil which they have done to His people, because they have scattered them among the nations and divided their land. Especially does the judgement touch Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia, because they have robbed the temple-treasures and sold the Jews to Greeks far away. But Yahweh leads the dispersed Jews back again, and gives these enemies into their hands, and the Jews will sell them as prisoners to a distant country (iii. 1–8). All nations shall arise for a great decisive battle, and turn the instruments of peaceful toil into arms; they shall all gather in the valley of Jehoshaphat. Yahweh shall bring down His heroes; the time of the harvest, that is of penalty, is come, for the evil of the nations is great. There is a great concourse of peoples in the valley of decision; sun, moon, and stars are darkened, and Yahweh makes His voice sound out of Zion, so that heaven and earth tremble. He is a refuge for His people, and they well know that He, Yahweh, is their God, who is throned on Zion. Strangers shall no more pass through the city (iii. 9–17). Yahweh blesses the land with rich fruitfulness, and even the thirsty land is watered. Egypt and Edom, on the other hand, are wasted, because they have done ill to the children of Judah. Yahweh takes vengeance on them for the innocent bloodshed, but Judah and Jerusalem abide for ever, and Yahweh dwells on Zion (iii. 18–21).

Of Joel and his time we know nothing but what is contained in his book. The heading of the book tells us that Joel was the son of Pethuel (βαθουήλ in LXX; Bethuel in Latin, Syriac, &c.). He lived and spoke in Jerusalem, at a period when the temple services were regularly maintained, when the Northern Kingdom did not come into the prophet's ken, and when the king of Judah demanded no mention; when Tyre, Sidon, and

Philistia, Edom and Egypt, were the national foes, and Assyria [1] and Babylon were beyond the horizon.

From the place which the book holds in the Hebrew Canon, between Hosea and Amos, the presumption was in favour of making Joel a contemporary, and if so, an older contemporary, of these prophets, and it was thought that Amos actually quoted him twice (Amos i. 2, Joel iii. 16; Amos ix. 13, Joel iii. 18). Credner [2] (1831) with great learning and ability defended this traditional date, and placed Joel in the early years of Joash, when the government was in the hands of the high priest Jehoiada (2 Kings xi. 4–21); and he explained the allusions to Philistines and Phoenicians by the statement in 2 Chron. xxi. 16, xxii. 1; the allusions to Edom by the revolt of Edom from Joram, 2 Kings viii. 20; and the allusion to Egypt by the campaign of Shishak a century before the time of Joash (1 Kings xiv. 25 f.); from that time to the end of the Hebrew monarchy Egypt was not the enemy of Judah. The allusion to the Valley of Jehoshaphat is explained by the victory gained by that king over Moab in the Vale of Beracah (2 Chron. xx. 26). But are these ingenious accommodations demanded simply because the little book stands between Hosea and Amos in the Hebrew Canon? Can the uncritical arrangement of the books in the volume of the Twelve Prophets weigh against even the slightest internal evidence of the writings themselves? How weak the appeal to arrangement is may be shown by the fact that in the first six of the Twelve Prophets, presumably pre-exilic, Obadiah and Jonah, exilic and post-exilic, are placed before the early prophet Micah. Laying aside the prejudice of tradition, and looking at the book itself, we see at once that it exhibits less the moral attitude of Amos and Hosea, or that of Isaiah and Micah, than that of Ezekiel, Zechariah, Malachi, and even Daniel. Further, iii. 1, 2 distinctly refers to the Captivity and dispersion of Israel. That there is no Northern Kingdom mentioned argues that there was none in existence, especially as Israel seems to be now synonymous with Judah. That priests and elders are mentioned, but not a king, is best explained by the circumstances after the Exile. The regularity of the temple service, the one sanctuary at Jerusalem, and the importance attached to the daily sacrifices, bring us into the atmosphere of the Book of Daniel (Dan. viii. 11, xi. 31, xii. 11 ; also Neh. x. 33). Further, we have here no denunciations of idolatry, such as flowed from the lips of the earlier prophets, and even of Ezekiel. It is fair to assume that the idols are at last put away, as they were after the Captivity. And there is no attack on the social and moral offences of the time (i. 5, it will be seen, is hardly an exception), such as filled the ministry of Hosea, Amos, Micah and Isaiah. The repentance called for is formal rather than moral. And finally, ch. iii connects itself with the Apocalyptic of Zechariah, of Zephaniah (iii. 8), or the Book of Daniel rather than with the practical and ethical oracles of the earlier prophets[1].

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[1] Assyria emerged on the prophetic horizon about 760 B.C., and the Babylonian Empire had fallen by 537 B.C. This, therefore, suggests that Joel is before the former or after the latter date.

[2] Followed by Hitzig, Bleek, Ewald, Delitzsch, Keil, and at first Kuenen.

The style is beautiful, smooth, and polished; Prof. Driver does not think that the phraseology points decisively to the later date, though it is in harmony with it. The following passages (see Commentary) suggest the later language : i. 2, 8, 9, 13, 18, ii. 8, 20, 22, 26, iii. 4, 6, 10, 11, 13. Prof. G. A. Smith remarks that the sound state of the text, in such extraordinary contrast with Hosea, is itself a reason for classifying it with post-exilic writings, Haggai, Malachi, and Jonah. And directly we boldly place the book at the end, and not at the beginning, of the line of prophets, we become aware how curiously it echoes all of them, and even quotes from many of them, from Amos to Malachi. (In seventy-two verses there are twenty of these literary parallels.) The Commentary therefore, following the modern authorities, will assume that the date is post-exilic. Vatke was the first to propose the later date; after Hilgenfeld and Duhm his view gained ground, until now it commands the support of such names as Kuenen, A. B. Davidson, Driver, Cheyne, Wellhausen, Robertson Smith, Merx, Farrar, G. A. Smith, G. B. Gray, and Nowack.

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[1] e. g. contrast the call to fast in Joel with the depreciation of fasting in the earlier prophets, Jer. xiv. 12 ; cf. Isa. lviii. 6.

On the whole we may fix the book between 444 B.C., the establishment of the Law under Ezra and Nehemiah, and 360 B.C., when the Persian government began to persecute the Jews.

A controversy has been long maintained whether the locust swarms are to be regarded as literal or figurative. Pusey, following the Fathers from Jerome, favoured the figurative interpretation, as he clung to the earlier date. Hilgenfeld, on the other hand, accepted the later date and yet admitted the figurative interpretation; he saw in the four kinds of locusts (i. 4) the campaigns of Cambyses, 525, Xerxes, 484, and those of Artaxerxes Ochus, 460 and 458, and therefore placed our book after this latest date.

But the modern interpreters as a rule take the locust swarms as literal, though the crux of the term, 'The Northerner' (ii. 20), remains as a stumbling-block; and all the strong expressions, such as comparing the ravages of the insects to flame and fire, are referred to the boldness of Oriental imagery.

The use made of the imagery of a locust swarm in our best-known work of Apocalyptic (Rev. ix. 3, seq.) suggests the view taken in the Commentary. The prophet had before his eyes a series of disastrous ravages, wrought by locusts, and he saw through the physical fact to spiritual realities behind and beyond. He touches the high-water mark of Apocalyptic prophecy. In great images, and the moving phantasmagoria of the world, he read the tremendous truths of the judgement of God, the repentance of men, the outpouring of the Spirit, the final triumph over the world. There is a deep spiritual connexion between the book and the N. T., and if its proper place is at the very end of the prophetic literature, where the Old looks out across the gulf, expectant of the New, we understand how divinely guided was Peter in seizing on the words of Joel to explain the great event of Pentecost (Acts ii. 16, 17).

Our study of this book should lead us to Christ and the baptism of the Spirit.

A few words are necessary about the locusts. The terror of such a plague has been frequently described, and after perusing some of the descriptions one feels that Joel's language is not too strong; and one can easily see how such a visitation, repeated for a few years, would force the mind of a prophet to think of the Day of the Lord, and would be in itself a strong call to repentance.

Prof. Driver (*Joel and Amos*, p. 90) has amplified Pusey's remarkable accounts of locust swarms, and Prof. G. A. Smith adds Prof. Bryce's vivid description of locusts in South Africa. These few facts should be remembered: the locusts fly in serried and orderly ranks like soldiers; 'when in an erect position their appearance at a little distance is like that of a well-armed horseman.' They advance in a cloud which rises twelve or eighteen feet from the ground. They blot out the sun and produce darkness. Their noise in flight is described as like the crackling of fire, or the hissing of thunder-rain. Their numbers are so prodigious that no attempts at destruction avail; over millions of dead, and ditches filled with the corpses, the unfailing host pours on. They devour all vegetation, and even the bark of the trees. They enter at the windows of houses, invading cities, and eat up all food, and even clothing, leathern bottles, &c., tearing what they do not consume.

Barrow, in his *South Africa* (p. 257), describes an area of sixteen or eighteen hundred square miles covered with locusts. And Doughty (*Arabia Deserta*, p. 307) mentions a fact which some think explains i. 4 : 'There hopped before our feet a minute brood of second locusts, of a leaden colour, with budding wings like the Spring leaves, and born of those gay swarms which a few weeks before had passed over and despoiled the desert. After forty days these also would fly as a pestilence, yet more hungry than the former, and fill the atmosphere.' This second brood, called by the Arabs *'Am'dau*, 'pillars,' flew over the travellers for some days, invaded the booths, and in their fierce hunger even bit the shins of men (p. 335).

Possibly the swarms in Joel's day were accompanied by a drought (i. 17), and followed by forest fires which burnt up the stripped trunks of the trees (i. 19). There may even have been earthquake and storm at the same time (ii. 10). But it is evident that a visitation of this kind might preach to a prophet's heart with overwhelming force. And though the Day of the Lord will contain judgements more searching than any physical plague, a physical plague so destructive, so softly irresistible, repeated for a few years running, might and would suggest that great and dreadful day. The invasion of our own world since 1890 by a mysterious disease which we call Influenza, baffling doctors, and reducing the strength of nations, might well be a reminder of the Day of Yahweh, and a call to repentance.

JOEL

THE word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of 1
Pethuel.

Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants 2
of the land. Hath this been in your days, or in the
days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and 3
let your children *tell* their children, and their children
another generation. That which the palmerworm hath 4
left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust
hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which
the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpiller eaten.

It will be noted that at ii. 18 there is a certain break in the book. Chs. i—ii. 17 is a description of the locust plague, and a summons to repentance. Ch. ii. 18-27 is Yahweh's gracious response to the penitence. Then ii. 28-32, which in the Hebrew forms ch. iii, and ch. iii, which in the Hebrew is ch. iv, are so distinct that Rothstein (in his translation of Driver's *O. T. Introduction*) assigns them, though inconclusively, to another writer. He thinks chs. i-ii are pre-exilic, and chs. iii-iv (Heb.) are post-exilic. But clearly the phrase 'it shall come to pass afterward' (ii. 28) indicates that the reader is carried far beyond the circumstances of the locust plague into an apocalyptic future of revelation, judgement, and Divine victory.

i. 1. The name **Joel** signifies 'Yahweh is God,' and **Pethuel**, 'persuaded of God.'

2. old men: not the elders officially, but the aged whose memory goes back farthest, whose duty it is to transmit the lore of the past to the next generation. The form of the question (*ha*, followed by *ve-im*) belongs to later Hebrew.

3. Deut. iv. 9, vi. 6, 7, xi. 19 (cf. Ps. lxxviii. 59). The wonders of Divine deliverance and revelation were to be transmitted in this way. Now the same method of annalising must record this huge calamity of the locust plague.

4. This awful description is conveyed in twelve Hebrew words, which an idiomatic English cannot equally compress. But as it is

5 Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the sweet wine; for it is

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the deeply significant text of the prophecy, it is worth putting down the formula:—

‘Shearer's (*gazam*) remnant, Swarmer (*arbeh*) eats,
Swarmer's remnant, Lapper (*yalekh*) eats,
Lapper's remnant, Devourer (*chasil*) eats.’

The four words which have these literal meanings might describe four out of the eighty or ninety species of locusts enumerated in the East.

‘Swarmer’ (*arbeh*) is the common name for locust, referring to its incalculable numbers, which have been known, descending like snowflakes, actually to smother a human being. The other three names (cf. ii. 25) may refer to other species (*gazam*, *yalekh*, *chasil*). In Lev. xi. 22 are two other names, *chargal* (hopper), *sal'am* (devourer). But it is better to suppose that Joel uses the words descriptively, not meaning different species, but ‘swarm upon swarm.’ The four words rise to a certain climax, as the Hebrew root *chasal* means to utterly destroy: Deut. xxviii. 38, *jachselennu, ha-arbeh* ‘the locust shall devour.’ The word *chasil*, for locust, is found in 1 Kings viii. 37, Isa. xxxiii. 4, as well as here. Hence in the *Jerusalem Talmud*, Taanith iii. 66^{d}, ‘Why is the locust called *chasil*? because it brings everything to an end.’

The idea that the names describe the locusts in different stages of their growth, completing what they had begun in the previous stage, is improbable. The locusts never return on their path, though, as Doughty observed, the young spring up in the wake of their parents, at first wingless, but in six weeks prepared for ravages even greater (Introd.). Well might Solomon pray against this plague: 1 Kings viii. 37, 38.

Pusey sees in the four names allusion to the four great invasions of Judah, the Assyrian, the Chaldean, the Macedonian, the Roman. The Fathers saw an allegory of the lusts; e. g. Gregory describes vainglory in the steps of lust, gluttony in the steps of vainglory, and anger in the steps of gluttony, ruining the soul, as the insects ruined the land. But both Pusey and the Fathers are not so much interpreting Joel as using him for a text to preach on. Quaint and interesting as this large and loose handling of Scripture is, we have no space for it, and must seek to learn only what Joel meant.

5. drunkards. This is not a special denunciation of drunkenness. It is only that the locust swarms have come just as the grape harvest was to be gathered. The drinkers will wake (Gen. ix. 24) to find that their cherished drink is not forthcoming. The ‘must’ (sweet wine) has failed because the vines have been stripped. For

cut off from your mouth. For a nation is come up 6
upon my land, strong, and without number; his teeth
are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the jaw teeth of a
great lion. He hath laid my vine waste, and barked 7
my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it
away; the branches thereof are made white. Lament 8

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the sweet wine, see iii. 18; Cant. viii. 2; Amos ix. 13; Isa. xlix. 26.

6. The swarm of locusts is not a family or a tribe only, but a nation! (Prov. xxx. 25). Their approach like an invading army is described still more graphically in ii. 4-11.

my land: not the prophet's (Nowack), but the Lord's (cf. Deut. xi. 12).

strong. The locust is terrible and irresistible by its incalculable numbers, which have been said to extend over 500 miles (Major Moor, quoted by Pusey) and darken the sun in their flight. But the little insect is also muscularly strong: 'Pressed down by the hand on the table, it has almost power to move the fingers' (*Clarke's Travels*, i. 438, quoted by Pusey).

jaw teeth of a great lion: i.e. the eyeteeth ('projectors,' Driver); better 'lioness.' The jaws of some species of locusts are toothed like a saw, and are very powerful; they can gnaw wood and leather as well as foliage.

7. He: rather the 'nation' of verse 6.

barked: the Hebrew word is only found here, though it may be connected with the word in Hos. x. 7 rendered as 'splinter.' It is quite true that locusts do eat the bark of the fig-tree and of the olive, but we cannot read that sense into the words here. Translate: 'my vine it has turned to waste, and my fig-tree to splinters.' This is hyperbolic; the locusts could not splinter the fig-trees, but they might reduce each fig-tree to the value of a mere splinter. Two quotations given by Pusey illustrate the verse: 'It is sufficient, if these terrible columns stop half an hour on a spot, for everything growing on it, vines, olive-trees, and corn, to be entirely destroyed. After they have passed nothing remains but the large branches and the roots, which being underground have escaped their voracity'; and 'They are particularly injurious to the palm-trees; these they strip of every leaf and green particle, the trees remaining like skeletons with bare branches.'

cast it away: 'strawed it' (Prof. G. A. Smith).

white. 'The country did not seem to be burnt,' says an observer of a locust visitation, quoted by Pusey, 'but to be much covered with snow, through the whiteness of the trees, and the dryness of the herbs.'

like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of
9 her youth. The meal offering and the drink offering
is cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests, the
10 LORD'S ministers, mourn. The field is wasted, the land
mourneth; for the corn is wasted, the new wine is

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8. Lament, feminine singular, addressed doubtless to the land, or 'the daughter of My people,' to use the familiar prophetic expression for Jerusalem. The verb in Hebrew is only found here; it is Aramaic, and points to a late date.

husband of her youth: left a widow before she is married, the sorrow of which is well understood in the East, especially in India. This tender relation of the young betrothed is often referred to in the prophets: Isa. liv. 6; Jer. ii. 2, iii. 4; Mal. ii. 14.

Pusey goes far afield in the allegorizing of the passage. And yet it is always appropriate to think of the soul's desolation when bereft of its heavenly Bridegroom. Is there any desolation like unto that? Is there any mourning more appropriate? If all bereft of Him would clothe themselves in black, there might be a visual appeal to return unto Him.

9. The meal . . . and . . . drink offering (Num. xv. 5, xxviii. 7), standing with or for the daily sacrifice (Exod. xxix. 38). When the crops were eaten and the vine destroyed the meal and the wine were not available for the offering. In the later Judaism, to which we suppose Joel belongs, nothing was more dreaded than the suspension of the Thamid, or 'the continual symbol of gracious intercourse between Yahweh and His people, and the main office of religion' (Dan. viii. 11, xi. 31, xii. 11). Josephus felt this breach of the daily sacrifice to be the most terrible and unprecedented calamity in the siege of Jerusalem (*Antiq.* xiv. 16, 2; *Bell. Jud.* vi. 2, 1). Neh. x. 33 tells how this, which before the Exile was the charge of the king, became the charge of the people.

The older prophets did not attach this importance to the sacrifices, which, apart from moral obedience, they were disposed to contemn (Isa. i. 12; Hos. iv. 6, viii. 11; Amos v. 25). Joel clearly belongs to the time of the second temple.

The Hebrew word for **ministers,** says Nowack, is only in the later language employed in reference to the cultus.

10. The verse in Hebrew consists of five couplets of words, which sound like a dirge: 'Blasted the field; mourneth the land; blasted the corn; ashamed the wine; pineth the oil.' It tells why the offerings cannot come to the temple. Note the land 'mourns' as the priests do (verse 9). The wine is ashamed of its failure. The oil wastes as in a conscious consumption. It is very graphic.

dried up, the oil languisheth. Be ashamed, O ye 11
husbandmen, howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat
and for the barley; for the harvest of the field is
perished. The vine is withered, and the fig tree 12
languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also,
and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field are
withered: for joy is withered away from the sons of men.
Gird yourselves *with sackcloth*, and lament, ye priests; 13
howl, ye ministers of the altar; come, lie all night in
sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meal offering
and the drink offering is withholden from the house
of your God. Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, 14

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languisheth: properly used of plants, cf. verse 12; Isa. xvi. 8, xxiv. 7; Nahum i. 4; but also of a town, Jer. xiv. 2; of a wife, 1 Sam. ii. 5; Jer. xv. 9; and of hopeless men, Isa. xix. 8; Hos. iv. 3.

11. Be ashamed: the cultivators, like the vine (verse 10), are to be ashamed. Joel's poetic spirit makes men and crops and fields mourn together. It is truer to the original to keep the one word 'ashamed' in the three verses; it was yielding to the prosaic spirit when the Revisers rendered the word 'dried up' in verse 10, and 'withered' in verse 12.

It is perhaps better, with Nowack, to read the verbs as perfects (marg.), 'the husbandmen are ashamed, the vinedressers howl.' Jerome says husbandmen and vinedressers are priests and preachers. But verse 13 ought to show us how untimely this allegorizing is here.

12. is withered: no, 'is ashamed'; and so at the end of the verse, twice. This frequent repetition of the word 'ashamed' is the proper sounding of the bell which calls to repentance in verse 13. When joy itself is ashamed, the time for penitence has come.

13 returns to verse 9. The priests are addressed on the same principle that the drunkards are in verse 5; by the failure of the crops their occupation is gone.

Gird yourselves: cf. verse 8 and Isa. xxxii. 11; in the later speech the word was used, without sackcloth, and in this reflexive sense for putting on mourning. Note the contrast of **my God** and **your God**. The prophet's God is He who calls for repentance; the priest's God is He who demands the drink offering and the meal offering.

14. solemn assembly: Isa. i. 13; Amos v. 21.

gather the old men *and* all the inhabitants of the land
unto the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto
15 the LORD. Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD
is at hand, and as destruction from the Almighty shal
16 it come. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, *yea*
17 joy and gladness from the house of our God? The
seeds rot under their clods; the garners are laid desolate

gather the old men. Wellhausen strikes out 'old men,' and makes the verb 'gather' reflexive. If we retain the text, as we are bound to do, 'old men' should be vocative. 'Gather, O elders, all the inhabitants of the land' (so Kuenen and Merx). Joel gives a special place to the old men, verse 2. The usual expression was 'call a fast.' The unexpected **sanctify** gives great solemnity to it.

This appeal to the priests is quite unlike the manner of the earlier prophets.

the house of . . . God, viz. the temple. In the older prophets there are always many sanctuaries in the land.

15 should be in inverted commas. The words are an echo of Isa. xiii. 6. It was perhaps an old cry, as old as prophecy. Man has his day and walks in his own way; but eventually Yahweh's day must come, and, in view of man's sin, Yahweh's day must be a time of vengeance. The closing words sound *Ukeshod mishshaddai yabo.* Prof. Driver renders the assonance 'as overpowering from the Overpowerer.'

Pusey says that the word 'Shaddai[1]' for God is always used with distinct reference to the Divine Power. It is used thirty-one times in the Book of Job.

16 returns to dwell on the hideous results of the locust scourge.

joy and gladness: which even in post-exilic times still gathered round the temple-worship, though its chief thought lay in burnt offering and sin offering.

17. A drought usually attends a locust plague: Amos vii. 1–4. This shrivels up the seeds in the soil. Prof. G. A. Smith suggests that the word translated **clods** may be connected with the corresponding Arabic, meaning 'shovels,' and translates 'hoes.' But

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[1] Dr. Radan, in *The Creation Story of Gen.* i, advances the hypothesis, approved by Prof. Sayce (*Expository Times*, xiv. 125), that Shaddai, a dual form, represents an Assryian *saduâ*, the two mountains, so that El-Shaddai = En-Lil in Assyria, 'The God of the upper and lower mountain, i. e. heaven and earth.' But Assyriologists are men of large imagination.

the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered.
How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are 18
perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the
flocks of sheep are made desolate. O LORD, to thee 19
do I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the
wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of

Rabbi Ezra and R. Kimchi gave the traditional meaning of 'clods,' which is much better.

barns: the word is cognate with that in Hag. ii. 19. Of course the buildings fall into decay when the use for them is gone.

withered. Keep the graphic force of the literal meaning, 'is ashamed.'

18. How do the beasts groan! I do not know why Wellhausen and Prof. G. A. Smith prefer the LXX here, 'what shall we put in them?' and read it with the previous verse. Nothing could be tamer than that. And nothing could be finer than 'how do the cattle sob!' participating in the sorrow of man. The verb 'groan' (sob) belongs to the later Hebrew, but if we are agreed that Joel is late, that is no objection. Prof. Driver gives his high authority for retaining the R.V.

Then the rest of the verse, showing the distress of the larger and of the lesser cattle, naturally follows. Wellhausen strangely says 'cattle do not sob!' For my part I was kept awake last summer several nights by the awful groans and sobs of a cow deprived of her calf.

perplexed: or rather, 'press themselves,' i. e. huddle together.

made desolate: nay, 'bear the guilt.' It is the lamentable function of these poor creatures to bear the guilt of man, whether on the smoking altar, or in the withered fields. It is the word in Hos. v. 15 translated 'acknowledge their offence' (also Hos. x. 2, xiv. 1). Nowack says 'the word is not suitable to flocks of sheep.' It is precisely the word which to poet and prophet, if not to commentator, would seem most suitable.

19. While the beasts sob and suffer, the human soul can cry to the Lord.

pastures, *lit.* seats or dwellings, may be either the folds or the fields where the flocks lie: e.g. Ps. xxiii. 2, lxv. 13.

wilderness: i. e. the uncultivated land, where the sheep are driven: Amos i. 2.

fire . . . flame. Perhaps we are to think of the heat and drought which accompany the locust plague. But it is possible that the locusts themselves are typified as fire, consuming the herbage. See Clarke's description of the *gryllus migratorius*: 'it

20 the field. Yea, the beasts of the field pant unto thee:
for the water brooks are dried up, and the fire hath
devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

2 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in
my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land
tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh
2 at hand; a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of
clouds and thick darkness, as the dawn spread upon the

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has red legs, and its inferior wings have a lively red colour, which gives a bright fiery appearance to the animals when fluttering in the sun's rays' (i. 438).

20. Even the wild beasts share the distress, and pant unto God (cf. Ps. xlii. 1, 2).

water brooks, translated in LXX by ἀφέσεις ὑδάτων (so Lam. iii. 48), which Deissmann in his *Biblical Studies* shows was the technical term for the irrigation-ditches in Egypt in the time of the Ptolemies and the Romans.

ii. *The call to repentance.* The description even darkens as the plague increases. The locusts, having ravaged the fields, now enter the towns.

1. the trumpet: Exod. xix. 16; Lev. xxv. 9. As an announcement of danger, Jer. vi. 17; Ezek. xxxiii. 3; Hos. viii. 1. The priests are told to blow (i. 14, ii. 15).

tremble, the Hebrew word in 2 Sam. vii. 10, xix. 1. The community, after the Exile, all dwelt in or near to Jerusalem, and might be summoned by the trumpet. The summons is, of course, to acts of penitence, in face of the scourge.

2, as far as **thick darkness,** belongs to the preceding verse: cf. Ezek. xxxiv. 12; Zeph. i. 15. All observers agree that a great locust cloud is like an eclipse.

as the dawn spread upon the mountains begins the new verse. The locust host is compared to the dawn, either (1) because of its ruddy appearance (see note on i. 19), or, as Prof. G. A. Smith thinks, (2) taking 'spread' as 'dispersed' (Ezek. xvii. 21), because, as the dawn is crushed by masses of cloud and mist, through which yet the sunbeams pierce white and fugitive, so the great locust cloud, with the white gleams which often break through it, shuts out the day.

Wellhausen thinks the dawn suggests the east, from which quarter the locusts came. But this is far-fetched, as the locusts come from south-east. Evidently the apocalyptic imagination of the prophet is at work. And in the touch that the swarm was mountains; a great people and a strong, there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after them, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth 3 before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and none hath escaped

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unprecedented we find ourselves carried to think of the spiritual calamities, of which the locusts are a symbol. Yet it is evident that Pusey's tendency to read it only as an allegory, and to see in a 'people great and strong' reference to an invading host of human enemies, destroys the imagery, and weakens the solemn terror of the passage.

3 shows how absolutely the prophet is thinking of the locusts alone, though with the magnifying eyes of the prophetic imagination.

A fire devoureth. Pusey with his wide learning is able to quote seven or eight travellers who describe the country visited by locusts as presenting the appearance of having been scorched, or burnt up, or reduced to brown ash. And this the more inclines us to take i. 19 as referring only to the devastation of the locusts themselves.

garden of Eden: Ezek. xxxvi. 26–35. Only in these two passages is the Eden of Genesis referred to. It seems evident from this and many other passages that Joel knew Ezekiel.

desolate wilderness: iii. 19; Jer. xii. 10.

none hath should be 'nothing hath' (as A. V.). If 'no man' is read, and that is a frequent meaning of the Hebrew word, it can be justified as a hyperbolic statement of the famine, starvation, and deaths which often follow a great locust plague.

Pusey's quotation from Alvarez (c. 33) is an exact commentary on this awe-inspiring verse. The mass of his confirmatory quotations is amazing. 'We travelled five days through lands wholly despoiled; and for the canes of maize, as large as the largest canes used to prop vines, it cannot be said how they were broken and trampled, as if asses had trampled them (cf. ch. i. 7); and all this from the locusts. The wheat, barley, maize, were as if they had never been sown; the trees without a single leaf; the tender wood all eaten; there was no memory of herb of any sort. If we had not been advised to take mules, laden with barley and provisions for ourselves, we should have perished of hunger, we and our mules. This land was all covered with locusts without wings, and they said that they were the seed of those who had all gone, who had destroyed the land.'

4 them. The appearance of them is as the appearance of
5 horses; and as horsemen, so do they run. Like the
noise of chariots on the tops of the mountains do they
leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the
6 stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. At their
presence the peoples are in anguish: all faces are waxed

4. horsemen: no, 'war-horses' (Hab. i. 8). The resemblance of the locust to a horse has often been observed, and Volney notices that at a little distance it looks like a well-armed horseman (Driver, *Joel and Amos*, p. 90). The Arab saying is interesting, for it illustrates the whole passage: 'In the locust is the face of a horse, the eyes of an elephant, the neck of a bull, the horns of a deer, the chest of a lion, the belly of a scorpion, the wings of an eagle, the thighs of a camel, the feet of an ostrich, the tail of a serpent' (Pusey).

5. The amazing noise of the locusts is heard six miles off; it is compared to a cataract, a torrent, a rushing wind, a raging flame. It is Joel's own image to liken it to the rattle of war-chariots. This comparison, however, forbids the allegorizing interpretation; he means locusts, and not an army of men and chariots, or he would not compare them to these. If he were describing an army under the image of locusts, it would be pointless to say that the locusts were like horses and chariots. Rev. ix. 7-9 enlarges this description.

6. in anguish: Mic. iv. 9. The terror of the people when a swarm impends has been often described. Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* xi. 35) says: 'They overshadow the sun; the nations looking up with anxiety lest they should cover their lands. For their strength suffices, and as if it were too little to have passed seas, they traverse immense tracts and overspread them with a cloud, fatal to the harvest.' (Pusey, who gives many other authorities.)

waxed pale: Nahum ii. 10. The phrase is difficult, *lit.* 'have gathered together redness.' We can only get the appropriate meaning, either by taking 'redness' as lividness or blackness, which is very forced (Prof. G. A. Smith), or by making 'gather together' mean 'withdraw' (Gesenius), which Pusey says is impossible[1]. Sometimes the easy rendering of the English rests on a quaking bog of uncertainty in the original.

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[1] Keil favours this view. To gather into oneself, when applied to the healthy glow on the cheek, is equivalent to withdrawing it. Fear and anguish cause the blood to fly from the face inwards.

pale. They run like mighty men; they climb the wall 7
like men of war; and they march every one on his ways,
and they break not their ranks. Neither doth one 8
thrust another; they march every one in his path: and
they burst through the weapons, and break not off *their*
course. They leap upon the city; they run upon the 9
wall; they climb up into the houses; they enter in at
the windows like a thief. The earth quaketh before 10

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7. Nothing is more terrible than the marshalled order of the locusts. They act under a common impulse. None leaves the ranks. They remain, as Jerome says, like the minute pieces of mosaic placed in the pavement by the artist's hand. Nothing short of infinite wisdom and power could make this terrible insect-host. They swarm over walls and enter houses. All act together, yet each pursues his own devastating way.

break not their ranks: *lit.* 'change not their caravans,' each squadron remains compact, like the regiments in an army. Wellhausen and Prof. G. A. Smith think it necessary to alter the Hebrew verb, to get the required sense. It involves only the change of the one Hebrew *t* into the other: cf. Mic. vii. 3.

8. path: highway. It is a stately description of the ordered host.

weapons: Heb. *shelach*, a late word (2 Chron. xxxii. 5; Neh. iii. 15, iv. 17; Job xxxiii. 18, xxxvi. 12). If we found musket mentioned in an old book, we should know it was not written in the days of the Conqueror; and so this word tells us that Joel is late in the Hebrew literature.

Weapons are useless against them because of their number; though millions are destroyed the rest march serenely on over their fallen comrades. Trenches filled with water to hinder them are quickly filled with drowned bodies and crossed; fires lighted to impede them are quenched by the ashes of the cremated.

Armies have literally been led out against the swarms; but in vain. The only hope of destroying them, as has been shown recently in Cyprus, is to get the eggs, which may be found in tons, and destroy them. Once the insects are born, man is powerless against the teeming host.

9. like a thief: i. e. the doors being shut they pour in at the unglazed windows. This image at least shows that the prophet is not thinking of an attacking army, but only of the actual locusts.

Yet it is impossible not to think of the same image used in the New Testament to describe the manner of our Lord's coming: Matt. xxiv. 43, 44; Luke xii. 39; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10. All

them; the heavens tremble: the sun and the moon are
11 darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining: and the
LORD uttereth his voice before his army; for his camp
is very great; for he is strong that executeth his word:
for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and
12 who can abide it? Yet even now, saith the LORD, turn
ye unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and
13 with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart,
and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your
God: for he is gracious and full of compassion, slow to

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the judgements of God, from a locust swarm to the last great day, have some elements in common.

10. A great storm accompanies, or follows, the locust invasion, and even an earthquake. This seems like a literal historical description of those years of calamity which moved Joel to prophesy (cf. iii. 15 for the apocalyptic interpretation of the phenomenon).

11. for . . . for . . . for are co-ordinate, not consecutive.

In the terrific storm the prophet hears Yahweh's voice; cf. 1 Sam. xii. 18; Ps. xviii. 14, xlvi. 8.

who can abide it? Jer. x. 10; Mal. iii. 2; Zeph. i. 14. Behind and beyond the locust ravages, and the earthquake and the storm, looms up the day of Yahweh (Amos v. 18), a camp more impregnable, a host more irresistible, a punishment great and terrible. Who can abide the day of His coming? The answer might seem to be, no one. But the prophet suddenly calls to repentance, as if even now the compassions of God would kindle. In spite of all these terrors and signs of coming judgement, men may turn.

12. Unlike the earlier prophets, Joel does not specify sins and demand that they be broken off. In place of penitence we have the day of penance. The **fasting, weeping,** and **mourning** ('mourning,' *lit.* beating on the breast, as Luke xviii. 13, xxiii. 48) belong also to the later religion; cf. Esther iv. 3.

turn ye unto me. The same phrase as Hos. xiv. 2 (q.v.).

13. Yet the penance must be heartfelt; and as against the mere ritual, Joel, like all true prophets, demands 'heart-sorrow and a clear life ensuing' (Ezek. xxxvi. 26; Ps. li. 19). Penitence is not an 'opus operatum,' a tearing of the garments; for this expression of grief see Lev. xiii. 45; Jer. xxxvi. 24; it is an inward sorrow, yearning, anguish, a tearing of the heart. The beautiful description of Yahweh is from Exod. xxxiv. 6 (cf. Num. xiv. 8; Ps. lxxxvi. 15, ciii. 8, cxlv. 8). The repenting of the evil is the phrase in Jonah iv. 2; cf. Gen. vi. 3, Hos. vi. 1, for the thought.

anger, and plenteous in mercy, and repenteth him of the
evil. Who knoweth whether he will not turn and repent, 14
and leave a blessing behind him, even a meal offering
and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn 15
assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, 16
assemble the old men, gather the children, and those
that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his
chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the 17
priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the
porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people,
O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that

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14 opens with the words found in Jonah iii. 9, a phrase also found in 2 Sam. xii. 22; Eccles. ii. 19.

turn, the same word used of Yahweh as of the penitents (verse 12). He is not a man that He should repent; He cannot turn or be converted like a man. And yet He has His own Divine ways of both repenting and turning. The prophets still linger in the twilight with regard to the All Holy and unchangeable One.

a blessing: viz. a new harvest, which will make meal and drink offerings again possible.

15. The **assembly,** called first in terror, i. 14, ii. 1, is summoned now in hope of the Divine compassion.

16. Here the grammatical difficulty of i. 14 does not occur. All sorts and ages of the people are to be summoned to this great and expectant act of penance. Even the bride and bridegroom, to whom a year's exemption from public duty was allowed (Deut. xxiv. 5), are included. For this general assembly of men, women, and children cf. 2 Chron. xx. 1–4, 13, and Judith iv. 9–13.

her closet: rather, canopy or pavilion, the bridal tent (Prof. G. A. Smith).

17. between the porch and the altar was the inner part of the court of the priests; cf. Ezek. viii. 16. Here Zechariah was standing when he was martyred, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20; Matt. xxiii. 35.

The idea of the priests praying for the people is unusual in the O. T.; it belongs only to the later religion; Mal. i. 9; 1 Macc. vii. 36–8 (see article *Prayer* in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*).

Pusey quaintly says 'a form of prayer is provided for them.' Priests usually require it.

Spare: cf. Neh. xiii. 22. In the older language it was always the nations should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the peoples, Where is their God?

18 Then was the LORD jealous for his land, and had pity
19 on his people. And the LORD answered and said unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no
20 more make you a reproach among the nations: but I will remove far off from you the northern *army*, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, his forepart into the eastern sea, and his hinder part into the western

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'the eye spares': since Jeremiah it occurs with other subjects as here; Jer. xiii. 14, xxi. 7; Ezek. xxiv. 14.

rule over them: rather, 'should make a proverb of them.' In spite of Pusey's abrupt refusal to accept the meaning of *mashal* given in the margin, Wellhausen, Nowack, and Prof. G. A. Smith all prefer it. (So Jer. xxiv. 9; Ezek. xii. 23, xviii. 2, 3.) The question is practically settled by verse 19, where it is not the domination, but the scorn of the heathen, that the Lord, in answer to the prayer, promises to avert.

Where is their God? This was the reproach which the later Jews dreaded most of all; Ps. xlii. 3, 10, lxxix. 10, cxv. 2. But it occurs also in Mic. vii. 10.

18–27. Here occurs the peripeteia of the book. Hitherto it has been a description of the calamity, and an eager call to repentance. Now—the fast day has doubtless been held—we are told how Yahweh intervened, heard, forgave, and opened up a wonderful prospect of judgement and deliverance.

The R. V. does a great service by marking this, and by putting the verbs in verses 18 and 19 into the past. For the first time to the English reader the situation is made plain.

19. his people. As the people have repented, Yahweh makes His promise to them, not to the prophet or to the priests. In place of dearth and reproach He promises plenty (cf. i. 10-12) and honour (cf. ii. 17).

20. the northern army: rather, 'the Northerner'; the terrible locusts are to be removed, scattered into the Desert, the Dead Sea, and the Mediterranean.

But why is the locust called the Northerner, when it comes to Palestine from the south-east? The simplest answer is that the prophet forgets for a moment the locust swarm, and thinks of the evil which it typified, viz. the invasion of the land from the sea; and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things. Fear not, 21

North, Assyria and Babylon; he had in mind the language of Jer. i. 14; Ezek. xxxviii. 6, 15[1].

hinder part: a word belonging to the later speech (2 Chron. xx. 16; Eccles. iii. 11, vii. 2, xii. 13; Dan. iv. 8, 29, vi. 26, vii. 26, 28), translated 'end' or 'last.'

ill savour also is a later word, found in the Targums. Nowack thinks this clause is a gloss; Prof. Driver and Prof. G. A. Smith think **his stink shall come up** is the gloss.

hath done great things. The subject is the Northerner; but that locust army was the instrument of Yahweh. The great things, terrible and repulsive as they were, have turned the people to repentance. The stink of the dead locusts is often referred to as intolerable and the cause of plagues. Augustine quotes Julius Obsequens, to show how a vast cloud of locusts, cast into the African sea, were rolled up putrid on the shore, and a plague broke out which carried off 800,000 persons. Barrow mentions the dead locusts cast up by the sea making a bank of three or four feet high and fifty miles long. Pusey's quotations are again wonderful and convincing.

21. Note how the land, the beasts, and the men, all the sufferers of ch. i, are now called to throw off their fear and to rejoice.

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[1] This phrase 'the Northerner' is the crux of the book, and I cannot say the solution offered seems satisfactory. But it is the best available, and is adopted by Wellhausen, Kuenen, and Nowack.

Pusey objects that the locust cloud would not be dispersed in various directions, east and west, because the swarm always goes straight on. But as the plague lasted several years (verse 25), the several quarters may in succession have contributed to its destruction. And he quotes Jerome as mentioning that a locust swarm was carried 'into the Eastern sea and the utmost sea,' but he thinks Jerome quotes this passage of Joel rather than records a fact of observation. Besides the swarm may have covered the country east of the Dead Sea as well as west, and so part would be driven into the one sea, and part into the other. Pusey's account of Alvarez praying for deliverance from the locusts and receiving the answer in a great storm which destroyed the insects, and filled the rivers and piled the banks with the corpses, is magnificent.

König, placing the prophecy of Joel in Josiah's reign (Jer. xiv. 2-6), justifies the phrase 'the Northerner' from Jeremiah. But this can be justified without following König's date.

We have to rest content with a lame explanation. Hitzig's ingenious proposal to translate the Heb. *Hazzephoni* by *ho typhonicos* (Acts xxvii. 14), the Typhoon, only shows to what straits interpreters are driven.

O land, be glad and rejoice; for the LORD hath done
22 great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field; for
the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree
beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their
23 strength. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice
in the LORD your God: for he giveth you the former
rain in just measure, and he causeth to come down for
you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain, in the
24 first *month*. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and
25 the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. And I will

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the LORD hath done great things: the contrast with the great things of the Northerner, verse 20. It is in the past tense, because the prophet already stands at the point where deliverance is accomplished.

22. The harvests spring afresh. The Hebrew verb rendered 'spring' belongs to the later language.

23. the former rain in just measure: *Hammoreh lezidkhah.* There is no doubt that *moreh* in the last clause of the verse means 'former rain.' But the Targum, Vulgate, Jewish writers, and later Keil, Pusey, Merx, translate the phrase in the first part of the verse 'Instructor in Righteousness.' The Rabbis referred it to Messiah, and so does Pusey with great confidence. The word means 'instructor'; 2 Kings xvii. 28; 2 Chron. xv. 3; Isa. ix. 15, xxx. 20; Hab. ii. 18; cf. Judges vii. 1, name of a place. Orelli thinks the instructor in righteousness is Joel himself, and Kuenen points out how the name Joel is identical with Elijah (Mal. iii. 1). But this introduction of an alien idea, and the use of the same word in two meanings close together, must decide against the tempting suggestion of Rabbis ancient and modern, and we must read 'the former rain for righteousness'; i. e. either, 'in just measure,' or, 'to declare the justification of the people' (so Davidson, *Expositor*, 1888, p. 203 *n.*).

former rain and the latter rain: i. e. the October and April rains, so absolutely necessary for the fertility of the land in Palestine.

in the first month: 'month' is obviously a wrong suggestion of our translators. The former and latter rains could not come in one month; it would apply only to the latter rain which comes in *Nisan* (April). We must adopt the margin 'at first,' or better still the LXX, 'as before' (Lev. xxvi. 4; Deut. xi. 14).

24 takes up verses 19 and 20.

restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the
cankerworm, and the caterpiller, and the palmerworm,
my great army which I sent among you. And ye shall 26
eat in plenty and be satisfied, and shall praise the name
of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with
you: and my people shall never be ashamed. And ye 27
shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that
I am the LORD your God, and there is none else: and
my people shall never be ashamed.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out 28

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25 shows that the locusts swarm had come year after year. The change in the order of the locust names shows that no stress was to be laid in i. 4 on the succession of different kinds—they are rather to be taken as descriptive names; the locust is the Swarmer, the Lapper, the Devourer, the Shearer. Pusey has some fine thoughts on repentance and the restoration of the past. God sometimes does wondrously and restores even the physical ravages, and external losses, induced by our sins. But the promise can hardly be deduced from this passage, which is speaking only of Nature's recuperative power.

26. This is the counterpart of i. 9, 13. Men can be satisfied and not thankful; that is satiety. The true blessing of God is that which includes gratitude. Hence the poet asks for many gifts, 'and not the least a thankful heart, to taste those gifts with joy.'

praise: *hillel*, a word belonging to the later language.

my people shall never be ashamed. Wellhausen would strike this out because it is repeated in the next verse. No doubt a critic in a thousand years' time will strike out the 'Nevermore' of Poe's *Raven* after the first verse, as a needless repetition.

27. This comes from Isa. xlv. 5, 17.

Israel. As the whole circle of Joel's thought is confined to Judah, it is evident that this does not refer to the Northern Kingdom. After the Exile that historic distinction was forgotten, and Israel stood again, as at the beginning, for the whole people.

28. In the Hebrew, verses 28-32 form a third chapter.

The word 'afterward' carries us far away from the locust plague, the repentance, and the restoration. That had been a symbol, a foreshadowing of great eschatological events, which are now unfolded. The close connexion between the first half of the Book, which seems all physical and material, and the second, which seems all spiritual and eternal, justifies us in thinking that earthly prosperity may be regarded as a sign and promise of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters

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Divine blessing, and even invites Prof. G. A. Smith's interesting demonstration from history, that a certain state of wealth and comfort conditions a spiritual awakening; but the very word 'afterward' reminds us that the prophet had not this connexion in his mind. He has been wrought upon by the religious experience of the locust plague; and the prophetic imagination, warmed by the disaster, the repentance and the pardon, takes a wider range, dips into the future, and under the form of a spiritual revival in Israel, and a deliverance from all outward foes, anticipates the great time, which received a first fulfilment on the Day of Pentecost, and will be finally fulfilled in the complete victory of Christ our Saviour. Prof. Thorold Rogers (quoted by Prof. G. A. Smith) regarded the opulence of Norfolk as the condition of Lollardy, the trading prosperity of the country as the foundation of Puritanism, and the improved wages of the workers as the condition of the Methodist revival; and this is an argument for seeking Social Reform as a preparation for the Gospel. But in a far deeper sense the visitations of God's Spirit are the cause rather than the outcome of material prosperity. And the connexion between the two should not be pressed in a passage like this where it is obviously not intended.

The parallel to this is found in Zech. xiii, which belongs to the same post-exilic period.

afterward. This is quite indefinite, not immediately after; the distance was fore-shortened to the prophet; Pentecost looked nearer than it was; and the hills of blessing, which even we have not yet reached, seemed in that evening light of prophecy already glowing on the horizon.

all flesh: not the animals, as Nowack says, but all mankind, which Nowack denies, on the weak plea that Joel is only thinking of Jews. If passages are required to show the universal meaning, cf. Gen. vi. 12, 13; Deut. v. 26; Job xii. 10, xxxiv. 14, 15; Ps. lxv. 2, cxlv. 21; Isa. xl. 5, 6, xlix. 26, lxvi. 16, 23, 24; Jer. xxv. 31, xxxii. 27, xlv. 5; Ezek. xx. 48, xxi. 4, 5; Zech. ii. 13. But no passage can be cited to show that 'all flesh' means only the Jews. Nowack says, that if the Gentiles had been meant, they would have been mentioned instead of the 'servants and handmaids,' and he also points to iii. 2, where the Gentiles are the subject of punishment, not spiritual baptism. But this cannot alter the 'all flesh,' and the objections of the commentator disappear when we remember that the prophecy is an inspired oracle and looks out to events and conditions which the prophet himself could not have understood. I wonder that Prof. G. A. Smith yields to the cramping rationalism of the commentator here.

shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your
young men shall see visions : and also upon the servants 29
and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my
spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in 30
the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun 31
shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,
before the great and terrible day of the LORD come. And it 32

'Sons and daughters, young men and old,' in a word, all sorts and conditions of men. The function of the prophet will be superseded in the universal effusion of the Spirit. The real commentary on this is 1 John ii. 27.

29. The early church saw the fulfilment of this, for undoubtedly, as Celsus scornfully pointed out, the majority of the converts and of the ministers were of the meaner sort. And now the most eminent servants of Christ frequently spring from the humble classes, e. g. Livingstone, and Moffat, and Chalmers.

In Ezek. xxxix. 29, Zech. xii. 10, the Spirit is promised to Israel, the king's house, and the favoured dwellers in Jerusalem. But Joel goes further, and anticipates the grand universalism of the Book of Jonah. All flesh, all classes, both sexes. The Rabbis (*Moreh Nebochim*, ii. 32) said: 'Prophecy doth not reside except on one, wise and mighty and rich.' While the prophetic spirit was expected in the upper classes and in the chosen people, the hope of the world declined, but on that day of Pentecost God called the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak to vanquish the strong. Naturally the mind of the humble spokesman on that occasion recalled the marvellous forecast of Joel.

30. We must not suppose that Joel, any more than other writers of Apocalypse, saw distinctly the connexion between the images which he described. The gracious heavens opened, and he saw that great effusion of the Spirit. Then the clouds closed in and he saw the signs which made 'the day of Yahweh' a terror.

wonders in the heavens, *sc.* **pillars of smoke; in the earth,** *sc.* **blood and fire,** doubtless the ravages of war (Ezek. xxxviii. 22).

31. The darkening of the sun; cf. ii. 10, iii. 15; Exod. x. 21; Isa. xiii. 10, xxxiv. 4; Jer. iv. 23; Ezek. xxxii. 7; Amos viii. 9. The terror of an eclipse is the fittest symbol of that great and dreadful day, when heaven and earth will pass away. The moon becomes blood-red, as we often see it in the murky air of London.

the great and terrible day of the LORD: cf. ii. 1, 11; Mal. iv. 5. In antiquity these signs in Nature were identified

shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape, as the LORD hath said, and among the remnant those whom
3 the LORD doth call. For, behold, in those days, and in

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with the destinies of men. To us they are rather illustrations or allegories of spiritual experience. The Day of Judgement here predicted may come in the broad sunshine, or in a moonlit night; and nothing could more nullify the prophet's intention than to imply that we need not fear 'that day' until these physical signs occur.

32. whosoever shall call. This is the familiar way of describing the worshippers of Yahweh; cf. Gen. iv. 26, xii. 8, xiii. 4, xxi. 33, xxvi. 25. The splendid universalism of this promise draws even Pusey out of his narrow ecclesiasticism, and he is constrained to say: 'They are members of the *soul* of the Church, who, not being members of the visible Communion and society know not, that in not becoming members of it, they are rejecting the commands of Christ, to whom by faith and love in obedience they cleave. And *they*, being members of the body or visible Communion of the Church, are not members of the *soul* of the Church, who amid outward profession of the faith, do in heart or deeds deny Him whom in words they confess.' But it is a pity to have a conception of the orbit of truth which requires these ingenious epicycles to explain it. Where does Christ speak of the *soul*, the *body* of the Church? 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' It is a sorry result of nineteen centuries of the thought of the Church, to produce a theory which is narrower and less inclusive than a prophecy of Joel's.

those that escape: Heb. *Peleitah*, the very word used in ii. 3. From the locust horde there was 'nothing that escaped.' In the great day of the Lord there is a remnant—Who are they? They are in Mount Zion and Jerusalem (Heb. xii. 22); yes, but they are there because they 'called on the name of Yahweh,' and consequently or perhaps because (1 Cor. i. 2) 'Yahweh called them.' Joel was only thinking of the literal Zion, Jerusalem and Jew; but his language went farther than he knew. That 'remnant in Jerusalem' embraces all those who believe, or shall believe, from all nations and kindreds and tongues.

as the LORD hath said: perhaps in ii. 17.

iii. Here the range of the prophet's vision contracts. From the great visions of the outpoured Spirit, which to our eyes manifestly mean the coming of Christ and the founding of the Church,

that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah
and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations, and will bring 2
them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will

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he returns to the national destinies of his people. It is true, the fulfilment of the prophecy in this chapter still lingers, and Paul (Rom. xi. 26) is our authority for expecting it in some unknown future; we might therefore defend the view of Nowack that 'in those days and in that time' refers to what has just preceded, and this judgement on the nations and deliverance of Jerusalem are to be connected with the final victory of the Christian Church. But we can handle the matter of the chapter more naturally, if, with Prof. G. A. Smith, we treat it as a separate oracle. It is idle to discuss whether it is from Joel himself, or what date would best suit it. Evidently Israel's fortunes were at a low ebb, and the people were scattered among the nations.

1. For. This seems to bind the chapter close to what has just preceded. But if this oracle is added to the book, the connecting particle might be inserted by an editor, or it might belong to another connexion.

in those days . . . when I shall bring again the captivity. The situation of chs. i–ii was post-exilic; the people were dwelling in their land and not in exile. If this phrase is to be taken literally we should have to suppose that ch. iii was written during the Exile. And that would certainly be the simplest and most natural explanation. But the phrase 'turning the captivity' became proverbial for 'restoring the fortunes of' the people (cf. Amos ix. 14), and it therefore does not allow us to fix confidently the date of the chapter. Supposing it to be written at the same period as chs. i–ii, viz. after the Exile, we must understand 'turning the captivity' to mean the realization of the Messianic hopes with which the returned exiles, in their poverty and weakness, filled their imaginations and comforted their hearts.

2. the valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will plead: Heb. *Emek-Jehoshaphat*, *venishphatti*. The common root *shaphat* (judgement) explains the choice of the name. There was no valley of this name at the time; the prophet described a valley, presumably near Jerusalem, which he called the vale of 'Yahweh will judge, for I will enter into judgement with them.' In verse 14 the same valley is called Decision, which shows that the name is allegorical.

The valley of the Kedron (1 Kings xv. 13; 2 Kings xxiii. 6, 12; 2 Chron. xxx. 14), between Jerusalem and Olivet, was called the valley of Jehoshaphat from this passage, and not vice versa. The tradition connecting the valley of the Kedron with this name can be traced no earlier than the time of Eusebius, in the fourth

plead with them there for my people and for my heritage
Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and
3 parted my land. And they have cast lots for my people:
and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for
4 wine, that they might drink. Yea, and what are ye to
me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the regions of Philistia?
will ye render me a recompence? and if ye recompense
me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompence
5 upon your own head. Forasmuch as ye have taken my

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century. Of course the event in 2 Chron. xx. 11–26 may have haunted the prophet's mind; but that valley cannot be meant here; for it was, and is still (*Bereikut*), called the Valley of Blessing (*Berachah*).

my heritage: the people, not the land, ii. 17; Ps. xxxiii. 12; Mic. vii. 14. **Israel** equivalent here to Judah. Isa. xxviii. 21 and Zech. xiv. 4 illustrate the general idea. All rests on Ezek. xxxviii.

3. cast lots: Obad. 11 and Nahum iii. 10. The nations have used the girls and boys of the unhappy Jews as current coin to purchase the means of debauchery, harlots (unless we might with Oort read a word for 'food') and wine.

4. The nations peculiarly deserving of Yahweh's judgement are singled out. Not Assyria and Babylon, which, if Joel is the writer, have long ago perished, but the immediate neighbours of Israel at every period of its history—Phoenicia, Philistia, Edom, and Egypt (verse 19). The names therefore do not determine the period, but the reference to the Grecians brings us down to the Persian period, when Syrian slaves were sold into Ionia. We can hardly say that verse 17 points to the persecutions of Artaxerxes Ochus in 360. The absence of any reference to the Persian overlords is explained by the fact that before Artaxerxes Ochus they treated Jerusalem with justice and leniency.

what are ye to me: viz. 'that I should withhold punishment from you.' Tyre and Zidon and Philistia (the circles, *lit.* regions, of Philistia are the five petty lordships in Joshua xiii. 2) were the age-long adversaries of Israel, never really conquered: Joshua xix. 28, xiii. 6; Judges i. 31, iii. 3 (Zidon); Joshua xix. 29 (Tyre); Joshua xiii. 2, 3, xv. 45–7, xix. 43 (Philistia).

will ye render me a recompence? The phrase belongs to the later language (2 Chron. xx. 11); i. e. 'Is it any deed of mine ye are repaying? if ye think ye are paying me out by your ill deeds to my people, swiftly and surely will I bring the payment back on your heads.'

silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples
my goodly pleasant things; the children also of Judah 6
and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the sons
of the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from
their border: behold, I will stir them up out of the place 7
whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head; and I will sell your sons 8
and your daughters into the hand of the children of
Judah, and they shall sell them to the men of Sheba, to
a nation far off: for the LORD hath spoken it.

5, 6. The charge against Phoenicia and Philistia is that (1) they have plundered the temple and carried the sacred things into their palaces (the word includes both temples and palaces, Amos viii. 3; Isa. xiii. 22). This situation is hardly identical with 2 Chron. xxi. 16f.; we know too little of the times after Nehemiah to identify the details; and that (2) they have sold the people of Jerusalem as slaves to the Ionians. The word Ionian, imported into Hebrew, stands for Greek; Gen. x. 2[1]; 1 Chron. i. 5, 7; Isa. lxvi. 19; Ezek. xxvii. 13, 19; Dan. viii. 21, x. 20, xi. 2; Zech. ix. 13. It occurs in the inscriptions of Sargon II. Robertson Smith (*Encycl. Brit.* xiii. 705) showed how in the fifth century B.C. Syrian slaves were in request in Greece. Earlier the Edomites were the slave-dealers (Amos i. 6, 9). But in Ezek. the Phoenicians are named in this connexion, xxvii. 13. The Greeks here, observes Wellhausen, appear only as traders, but in Zech. ix. 13 as rulers. Strabo mentions (xiv. 5, 2) that as many as 10,000 slaves were sometimes sold in the market at Delos on a single day.

far from their border: the Greeks were evidently to Joel the remote horizon on the west.

7, 8. The punishment on the Phoenicians and Philistines: (1) the slaves they sold shall be brought back; (2) they shall furnish slaves to Judah, and their children shall be carried to the south-east, as they had carried the Jews to the north-west.

men of Sheba: the great trading race in Arabia Felix (Gen. x. 7). Ezek. xxvii. 22 mentions them trading with Tyre. Tyre had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar; Alexander the Great took it, and sold 13,000 into slavery (*Diod. Sic.* xvii. 46); Arrian says 30,000 (ii. 24). Sidon was taken by Artaxerxes Ochus

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[1] Prof. G. A. Smith says (p. 381) that the name does not appear in Hebrew before the Exile. Of course he assumes that Gen. x is late.

9 Proclaim ye this among the nations; prepare war:
stir up the mighty men; let all the men of war draw
10 near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into
swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak
11 say, I am strong. Haste ye, and come, all ye nations
round about, and gather yourselves together: thither
12 cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. Let the
nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of
Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the nations
13 round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is

(about 360 B.C.) and 40,000 perished in the flames (*Diod. Sic.* xvi. 45). A similar doom came on the Philistines; cf. Zeph. ii. 4-7.

9. This is a terrible irony. Yahweh invites the nations to come up to war with Him (cf. Isa. viii. 9, 10). Their defeat is sure.

this: viz. the proclamation of verse 10.

prepare war: rather 'sanctify,' i.e. by solemn offerings according to custom (1 Sam. vii. 8 f.; Jer. vi. 4). This deepens the irony. They seek to propitiate God for success in fighting against Him!

come up: the technical Hebrew word for going out to war.

10. plowshares into swords: the deliberate reversal of the beautiful promise for the peaceful Messianic reign of the older prophets, Isa. ii. 4; Mic. iv. 3.

spears: a word of the later language is used.

let the weak say: of course it is a vain boast.

11. Haste ye. The Hebrew word is ἁπ. λεγ. and its meaning is conjectural. LXX renders 'gather together.'

gather yourselves: in the Hebrew 'let them gather themselves' by a mistake.

thither, *sc.* into the valley of Jehoshaphat or Decision.

cause . . . to come down: a late Aramaic word is used.

mighty ones: *sc.* the heavenly hosts, Ps. ciii. 20.

12. bestir themselves: *lit.* 'awake'; as Pusey says, it seems to speak of the Last Day. Our Lord perhaps had the passage in His mind both in Matt. xxv. 31, 32, and in Matt. xiii. 30, 39. 'The valley of Yahweh who judges' is not a local but a spiritual description. And that great thought of the harvest of the world can in our mind hardly be dissociated from the Maker of the parable of the wheat and the tares.

13. Put ye in: addressed to Yahweh's mighty ones, verse 11.

ripe: come, tread ye; for the winepress is full, the fats
overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, 14
multitudes in the valley of decision! for the day of the
LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and 15
the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their
shining. And the LORD shall roar from Zion, and utter 16
his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the
earth shall shake: but the LORD will be a refuge unto
his people, and a strong hold to the children of Israel.
So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling 17
in Zion my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be
holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any

The harvest-reaping and the grape-treading are natural images of judgement.

sickle: a word only here and in Jer. l. 16.

is ripe: the word in Hebrew usually means 'to cook.'

The meaning **tread ye** can be maintained from the Hebrew word, *radah*.

overflow: the word in ii. 24. There of plenty, here of judgement.

their wickedness: Gen. vi. 5.

14. multitudes. The repetition is the natural way of expressing untold numbers. The Hebrew word is equivalent in sound and meaning to 'hum,' and suggests the noise as well as the number of the assembled nations.

decision: Isa. x. 22, judgement.

15. This darkness, symbolical of judgement, as at the Crucifixion, might mean that before the great light of God the lesser lights withdraw, but it is more likely to mean the terror and confusion of the Divine wrath, ii. 10, 31; Isa. xiii. 10; Ezek. xxxii. 7; Matt. xxiv. 29; Mark xiii. 24.

16. roar like a lion; cf. Amos iii. 8, so our Lord, Rev. v. 5. In the earth there is nothing more majestic than the mien, or more awe inspiring than the roar of a lion. The half-verse is taken from Amos i. 2, whence also Jer. xxv. 30.

heavens and the earth shall shake: ii. 10.

refuge . . . and a strong hold, like Isa. iv. 6.

17. strangers. It had been surrendered to strangers during the Captivity. The promise that such a desecration shall not come again is frequent; Isa. lii. 1; Zech. ix. 8, xiv. 21; cf. Job xv. 19. If Joel wrote in or about the time of Artaxerxes Ochus, when the

18 more. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah shall flow with waters; and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.

Persians were trampling Jerusalem, the promise would have a special meaning. Of the earthly Zion the promise has not been, and cannot well be, fulfilled. But this the more casts our thoughts on the heavenly Jerusalem, of which the promise is true; Rev. xxii. 15.

iii. 18-21. *The blessing which follows the judgement.* The prophet understood it literally; we are bound to interpret his words spiritually.

18. mountains . . . hills: this is from Amos ix. 13. A strong image for the vines terraced on the mountains and the herds pastured on the hills, yielding wine and milk. In Judah are no brooks; the word means rather, channels of the torrents; only in rainy seasons is there water.

fountain . . . of the house of the LORD: Zech. xiv. 8.

valley of Shittim: i. e. acacias, is the valley of Shittim across Jordan where Israel encamped (Num. xxxiii. 49); Ezekiel, in the passage from which the image is taken (xlvii. 1 ff.), pictured the waters flowing eastward, as it were across Jordan. We are in a world of imagery here, and it is absurd to be geographical. Wellhausen's suggestion, therefore, of *Vadi al Sant* on the way to Askalon, as the vale of Shittim here meant, is unnecessary. Far more probable is Pusey's suggestion: the acacia is a desert tree, like a whitethorn in colour and leaves. Jerome says it only grew in the desert of Arabia. The valley of Shittim therefore is a dry and thirsty place. The fountain in Jerusalem shall flow out to such wastes. Then the name had the advantage of recalling some of the most memorable scenes in history; Num. xxiii, xxiv. 17, xxv. 1, 7, 11, xxxiii. 49; Joshua ii. 1. That literal valley was seven and a half miles beyond the Dead Sea from Jerusalem; but even across those lifeless waters, and into that historic desert, should these living waters from Jerusalem reach.

The beautiful image was suggested by the fact that Zion had actual fountains of perennial water, artificially secured and replenished by wise ancient kings. These fresh streams poured out from the temple courts, filled the pool of Siloam, and made a verdant track down the vale of Kedron, and through the *Wady en Nar* ('valley of fire') into the Dead Sea. The natural fact was taken by the prophets, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Joel, and spiritualized.

It must be owned, however little Joel intended it, that the verse

Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate 19
wilderness, for the violence done to the children of
Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their
land. But Judah shall abide for ever, and Jerusalem 20
from generation to generation. And I will cleanse their 21

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is an exquisite image of the heavenly Jerusalem, and of the beatific vision which shall eternally refresh and quicken the people of God.

19. How little Joel saw that distant future is shown by the closing verses, which come back to the prosaic facts of the country and the time.

Egypt as the old oppressor, **Edom** as the constant thorn in the side of Israel that triumphed over and benefited by Israel's calamities. Ps. cxxxvii. 7; Lam. iv. 22; Ezek. xxv. 12, xxxv. 15, xxxvi. 5; Obad. 10–14: cf. Amos i. 11.

their land: *sc.* of the Idumeans and Egyptians. To what this shedding of innocent blood in Edom and Egypt refers we could only say if we knew the history of the land after the Exile, but that lies in the dark. Pusey has an exhaustive note on the ancient glories and fertility, and the modern degradation and misery, of Egypt. Certainly she, the most cultured land of antiquity, became a desolation. But another prophet forecasts its restoration. And under the British protectorate this ancient and interesting country is reviving. Edom, which shows now the traces of its ancient fertility and prosperity, became a desert (Mal. i. 3), and is now a desert beyond hope of recovery. Lying between the south end of the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aelana, it was on the main road between Egypt and Babylon. Petra, its capital, was the halting-place of the caravans. All the wealth of Arabia poured through it. Elath and Ezion-geber (Deut. ii. 8) belonged to the region. Even in Roman times a great road was run from Jerusalem to Petra. But the desolation is now complete and apparently final.

20. Judah: evidently here the land. Wonderful to say, neither Roman nor Turk has reduced the little country of Judah to a desolation. In our own day the Zionists propose to restore its fertility, build its cities, and bring back its ancient glories.

21. I will cleanse. A difficulty lies here. The word applies to the person who is declared innocent, not to the blood. Merx would take it to be, 'I will declare the blood of Judah innocent,' i. e. no longer shall guilt be incurred by the shedding of blood in the good Messianic times. But the LXX reads the Hebrew word which means 'I will seek' (cf. 2 Kings ix. 7). This would mean 'I will avenge their blood.' Nowack accepts this change, proposed blood that I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.

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by Wellhausen, but, contrary to Wellhausen, he does not change the second 'I have cleansed,' while he denies the imported relative 'that.' This gives a clear sense: 'And I will avenge their blood (mentioned verse 19); I will not cleanse (the Idumean and Egyptian murderers).'

For 'avenge their blood' see Rev. vi. 10, 11.

for the LORD dwelleth: in the Hebrew, 'and Yahweh dwelling in Zion.' Prof. G. A. Smith takes it as an oath, 'by Yahweh who dwelleth in Zion,' but that is hardly possible, as Yahweh is the speaker. The brief Hebrew expression rather gives to the 'I' the necessary interpretation, I am He that dwelleth in Zion. The name Yahweh means essentially 'I am,' and this explanation of His name is given in the same way and with the same intent as when it was given to Moses in Exod. vi, i. e. it is the pledge of deliverance. Why shall the splendid promise of verses 18-21 be fulfilled? Because Yahweh dwells in Zion. This promise is singularly like the glorious ending of Matthew's Gospel. There is no more beautiful contrast in Scripture than that between the terror and consternation with which Joel begins and the peace and triumph with which he ends. The little book passes from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City.

AMOS

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

AMOS

INTRODUCTION

THE book of Amos is the earliest prophetic writing which has come down to us. It is a pity that in our Canon it should follow Joel, which is probably the latest, and Hosea, a contemporary who developed the message and teaching of Amos. The book is compact, connected, and authentic. Some twenty-six verses have, on various grounds, been suspected as later insertions, but the bulk of the book is unquestioned as an autograph document from the middle of the eighth century B. C. It is therefore an invaluable starting-point for understanding the literature of the Old Testament—a fixed, historical fact shedding light on other writings which are less certain.

Who Amos was he tells us himself, i. 1, vii. 10–17, which is autobiographical. A herdsman and dresser of sycomores, born at Tekoa, seven miles south of Bethlehem in the Southern Kingdom (2 Sam. xiv. 2, xxiii. 26; 1 Chron. ii. 24, iv. 5; 2 Chron. xi. 6, xx. 20; Jer. vi. 1), entirely unconnected with the prophetic schools of the time, he was sent by the call of God to prophesy to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Thus while he starts from Zion (i. 2) his ministry culminates at the rival shrine, the royal sanctuary, Beth-el (vii. 13). The date is fixed by i. 1, vii. 9, for Jeroboam II reigned between 782 and 743, a long and prosperous and victorious reign. If we knew the date of the earthquake in the reign of Uzziah, the contemporary king of Judah (Zech. xiv. 5), we could be more exact still. But we can get a few hints from other sources. In 765 B. C. the Assyrians for the second time invaded Hadrach, near Damascus, and their records mention a pestilence which broke out. In 763 B. C. occurred a total eclipse of the sun. It is reasonable to think that the pestilence and the eclipse mentioned by Amos (viii. 9) may have been these. Again Tiglath-Pileser (the 'Pul' of 2 Kings xv. 19) besieged Arpad from 743 to 740 (cf. vii. 9), but between 754 and that date the Assyrian left the Western countries undisturbed. We may conjecture therefore that the time of ease in Zion, of prosperity, luxury, and moral corruption, which brought the reign of Jeroboam II to an end, the decade 753–743, was the period of Amos' activity.

Prof. G. A. Smith thinks that the three sections into which the book naturally falls, viz. chs. i–ii, iii–vi, vii–ix, run in a manner parallel to one another, and that in each section a certain process may be traced. For instance, in each section God is represented as first seeking to touch Israel by physical calamities, and then when that failed having recourse to political troubles (especially iv. 6–12). The chronological relation of the three sections may also be to some extent determined by this, that in section 1 there is no allusion to the earthquake mentioned in the Introduction (i. 1); in the second section it is referred to (iv. 11); in the third section two passages describe the coming judgement under the form of an earthquake. 'If then Amos began to prophesy two years before the earthquake, the bulk of his book was spoken, or at least written down, after the earthquake had left all Israel trembling' (p. 69). But as we do not know the year of the earthquake, this does not enable us, nor is it necessary, to fix the date more exactly in the decade we have mentioned.

At the end of Jeroboam's reign the Northern Kingdom was demoralized by the pride of victory, by wealth and by luxury (2 Kings xiv. 25). The king had defeated the Syrians of Damascus, who had been weakened by the incursions of the Assyrian king, Shalmaneser III, in 773–772 B.C. (i. 3, vi. 8, 13, viii. 6). What distinguishes Amos, therefore, is the burning ethical zeal of his denunciations of the vices and the oppression which prevailed in the king's court and among the self-satisfied nobles. It was

Amos' startling message, that Yahweh would visit the sins not only of the surrounding peoples, which Israel was well pleased to hear, but of Israel itself. The false notion that the covenant with Israel was independent of the moral obedience to the law of Yahweh was swept away. The thunder breaks over the head of the devoted nations (chs. i–ii. 4), and then it breaks with a still louder peal over Israel (ii. 6–16). 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth: *therefore* will I visit you'—that is the surprising revelation of the book; that constitutes its eternal value in the history of the kingdom of God.

Behind the message was a man, a life, 'one of the most wonderful appearances in the history of the human spirit' (Cornill). A shepherd who tended a peculiar breed of desert sheep (he calls himself *nôḳêd*, and the Arabs still call these short-legged and deformed sheep with the fine hair *naḳad*), a herdsman (vii. 14), a dresser of the small fig-trees (called wrongly 'sycomores'), the poor and watery fruit of which was provoked to ripeness by pinching (the word 'dresser' means 'pincher'), Amos lived in the desert of Judea, which fell down in terraces and dreary slopes from the ridge of Tekoa, twelve miles south of Jerusalem to the level of the Dead Sea, eighteen miles distant, 4,000 feet below. Tekoa itself was, and is, for the name survives to-day (Tekûa), 2,788 feet above the sea, and the 'sycomore' does not grow at a greater altitude than 1,000 ft., but in the lower parts of the desert a shepherd might grow a few of the trees, which are the easiest grown of all fruit-bearing trees. It was in this same desert of scant vegetation, prowling beasts, and terrible outlook, but for the towers of Jerusalem dimly visible to the north, and the blue strip of the Dead Sea visible to the east, that John the Baptist was prepared for his mission (Luke i. 80), and our Lord kept his vigil of temptation (Mark i. 18). Perhaps to sell his wool Amos travelled to the Northern Kingdom, twelve miles to Jerusalem, ten more to Beth-el (vii. 10), seven more to Gilgal, twenty more to Samaria, a two days' journey from Tekoa. Perhaps as a traveller he came into contact with the various sorts of men—Moabite, Aramean, Philistine, Phoenician—mentioned in his pages, and saw the things which he describes with such vivid touches, the slave trade, national mourning, the alarm of the Assyrian, the feasts, the revelries, the thieving priests, the covetous traders; and heard the viols, the songs, the preposterous music (vi. 1, 4-7). Gaining his vision and his imagery in the desert, he learnt to apply his message in the crowded, bustling, religious, godless ways of men. How significant, that the voice of Yahweh first comes to him as the roar of a desert lion (i. 2). That tremendous voice from Zion across the desert is the first call to prophecy (iii. 8). The book teems with reminders of the desert life and of the shepherd's experience. The word of Yahweh authenticates itself by this, that it comes not to the cultured students in the schools of the prophets, but to the labourer in the open air.

Amos is the realist among prophets, the man of the people who 'into politics brings facts, into religion vision' (Prof. G. A. Smith). He is like a modern socialist reformer. Indignant over the wrongs of the poor, he has no pity for the oppressor. The element of love is wanting. He hardly calls men to repentance; he is engaged in the denunciation of doom. Only in one brief vision at the end, which seems out of relation to the rest, the rigour relaxes, the voice softens, and the promise of restoration and blessing struggles up like a late winter dawn. Such is the remarkable figure with whom the written prophecy of Israel begins. This prophet did not derive his message from the law; though the Book of the Covenant (Exod. xx) was published, and the ethical basis of the national life therein expressed was by him presupposed. Nor did he, like a boulevard journalist, derive his message from the terrible political event of the day, the approach of the Assyrian power, though that event seemed clearly to him to enforce the penalty which he denounced on the national sins.

His message came from his own conscience, moved and enlightened by the Spirit of God. He castigated the outrages of nobles, merchants, kings and priests, by the moral sense which was common to him and to all Israel. But in the clearness of his conviction God led him to enunciate two truths which the people of his time were ill prepared to receive, and these two truths constitute the originality of the prophetic message, and place Amos among the great teachers of religion in the history of the world. They were :—

1. National privilege carried with it no immunity from Divine punishment. Nay, the more surely a people is God's, the more surely will He chastise their sins.

2. The ceremonial of religion had no power to propitiate or to bind the Most High. God is righteousness; the two terms are identical (v. 6, 14). Apart from justice and righteousness, all the elaborate devices of religion would be of no avail (v. 21).

When one remembers how the later Judaism fell away from these clear principles, and how small a part even of Christendom has yet grasped them in any decisive way, we can have no difficulty in recognizing the striking place of Amos in the history of religion, or in admitting that the great truths came to him by revelation.

The book of Amos confirms the modern view of the composition of the Pentateuch. The prophet does not seem to know any elaborate ritual, and he even implies that sacrifices were unknown in the wilderness (v. 25: so Jer. vii. 22). If this, the most obvious interpretation of his words, is correct, we must conclude that the Priestly Code and even the Deuteronomic Code, in the Pentateuch, were not yet promulgated. The contrast between Amos and Joel in this respect is startling. To Joel the feasts and assemblies of the Priestly Code are a matter of course; to Amos they are unknown, as authoritative practices, and are set over against the moral demands which Yahweh makes on His people.

To see Amos at his height of grandeur one must see him confronting alone the priest Amaziah, at some great assembly round the king's sanctuary of Beth-el (ch. vii). First we have the gist of his preaching in Israel, and then the scene on that great day when the official priest denounced the unofficial prophet, very much as the priests assailed our Lord in a later day. That is the climax, and the autobiographical passage gives a vivid historical reality to the book.

It remains to present a synopsis of the contents, that the reader may appreciate the unity of the whole and the relation of the parts.

Part i. Chs. i, ii. A series of judgements on the peoples of Syria and Palestine, each framed on the same plan, naming a special unpardonable fault for which punishment falls. The most decisive is the last on Israel itself; the least impressive is that on Judah which immediately precedes it.

Part ii. Chs. iii–vi. At first this section seems to consist of three discourses, beginning each with 'Hear ye this word,' and ending with a denunciation. But the connexion is so slight, the changes so rapid, that ten different passages may be marked; perhaps, however, they may be reduced to six, thus:—

1. Ch. iii. 1, 2. 'Hear this word,' the main theme of judgement; 3–8 a parenthesis on the prophet's right to threaten doom, then 9–15 follows on verse 2, threatening the invasion and overthrow of the land.
2. Ch. iv. 1–3. 'Hear this word.' Against women. The siege of the capital and captivity.
3. Ch. iv. 4–13. The vain ritual; the punishments of a physical kind, drought, blight, locusts, pestilence, earthquake; an approaching visitation more terrible still, of a political kind. 'Yahweh, God of Hosts, is His name.'

4. Ch. v. 1–17. 'Hear this word.' A dirge. The vain ritual; Yahweh's demand. A reprieve offered to repentance (verses 14, 15), without connexion, passes to a universal mourning (verses 16, 17).
5. Ch. v. 18–27. Opens with 'Woe,' closes like (3) with 'Yahweh, God of Hosts, is His name.' The Day of Judgement will be disastrous. Yahweh wants justice, not ritual. Captivity beyond Damascus.
6. Ch. vi. The second 'Woe.' Verses 3–6, a satire on the indifference of the rich. Verses 7–14, captivity must come to a nation so perverse. A *nation* (*sc.* Assyria) will oppress them from Hamath to the Arabah.

Part iii. A series of Visions, interspersed with a narrative and addresses.

1. Ch. vii. 1–3. Locusts, averted by the prayer of Amos.
2. Ch. vii. 4–6. Drought, also averted.
3. Ch. vii. 7–9. A plumb-line in Yahweh's hand shows that the national fabric must fall and Jeroboam's dynasty cease. Here comes the narrative: Amaziah the priest reports Amos to the king, and tries to silence the prophet, but Amos prevails (verses 10–17).
4. Ch. viii. 1–3. Vision of *kaits* (i. e. summer fruit), which suggests *kets* (i. e. end, *sc.* of the nation).

There follows in viii. 4–6 another attack on the rich, and 7–14 a fresh announcement of physical calamity, with renewed condemnation of the worship.

5. Ch. ix. 1. The vision of Yahweh by the altar commanding to smite. Then follows the hopelessness of resistance, and a restatement of the equality of Israel in punishment.

At verse 8^b is the first sign of relenting. Captivity is not doom but discipline; the sinners only will die. And then, with a surprising want of connexion, follow two oracles of restoration and glory, such as abound in later prophecy (verses 11–15.)

If the above analysis shows that there is something to desire in the connexion of the pieces with one another[1], we must not attribute this to the shepherd-origin of Amos, or with Jerome, quote him, as one 'rude in speech but not in knowledge.' The literary form and finish of the book are very noticeable. 'His language, with three or four insignificant exceptions, is pure, his style classical and refined,' says Prof. Driver, who specially quotes the fine climax in iii. 3–8. Roughness and rusticity are absent from his work; and the flow of his sentences is in marked contrast with the abruptness of Hosea. When God calls a shepherd to be His messenger, He often makes the language as noble as Burns's or Cobbett's, besides retaining the richness of imagery and allusion which can only be found in the contact with an open and untrammeled nature (iii. 4, 8, v. 8, 16, 17, 19, ix. 9).

Prof. Robertson Smith (*Prophets of Israel*, p. 126) finely says: 'To associate inferior culture with the simplicity and poverty of pastoral life is totally to mistake the conditions of Eastern society. At the courts of the Caliphs and their Emirs the rude Arabs of the desert were wont to appear without any feeling of awkwardness, and to surprise the courtiers by the finish of their impromptu verses, the fluent eloquence of their oratory, and the range of subjects on which they could speak with knowledge and discrimination. . . . The prophecies of Amos are excellent writing because the prophet writes as he spoke, preserving all the effects of pointed and dramatic delivery, with that breath of lyrical fervour which lends a special charm to the highest Hebrew oratory' (ibid. p. 127).

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[1] Baumann, in his *Aufbau der Amosreden*, has recently attempted to show that our book is made up of ill-arranged fragments, *disjecta membra* of Amos' discourses, badly edited. He finds five groups of ideas; e. g. i. 2–8, 13–15, ii. 1–3, 6–11^a, 12, 11^b, 13, 14^a, 16^a, 14^b, 15, 16^b; and a second group, iii. 1–5, 6^b, 6^a, 8, iv. 1–3, viii. 4–8, 9^a, &c. He confirms his theory by metrical considerations.

AMOS

1 THE words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

2 And he said, The LORD shall roar from Zion, and

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i. The title (verse 1) shows by its form that it was added by an editor who looked back upon Amos and located him by an event which subsequently happened—the great earthquake (cf. Zech. xiv. 5).

1. herdmen: Heb. *Noḳdim*, the shepherds of the dwarfed sheep with the fine wool, which is still called '*naḳad*' by the Arabs. 'Viler than a *naḳad*,' is an Arabian proverb of contempt. The king of Moab is called by this name (2 Kings iii. 4), and Jewish writers, who thought prophecy could only come to the great and rich, maintained that Amos was a 'sheep-master' in this regal sense; but his own modest disclaimer (vii. 14) is enough.

Tekoa (2 Sam. xiv. 2; 2 Chron. xx. 20), a town high perched on the bare ridge six miles south of Bethlehem (to-day Tekûa). From it the country falls down in desolate terraces to the level of the Dead Sea, glimpses of which are seen from it, with the mountains of Moab beyond. In the north the herdman of Tekoa could see, twelve miles away, the mountain (Olivet) near Jerusalem. The herdman's landscape was therefore the wilderness and Mount Zion—the earthly sources of his inspiration.

saw: *chazah*, the word specialized for prophetic seeing, Num. xxiv. 4, 16; Isa. xxx. 10; Ezek. xii. 27.

before the earthquake: for the notes of date see Introduction. What an earthquake could do in Palestine is clear from Josephus, *Ant.* xv. 5. 2. It was in the year of the battle of Actium, B.C. 31; 'ten thousand were buried under the ruined houses.' The earthquake in Uzziah's reign left an awful memory behind, Zech. xiv. 5.

2. The LORD shall roar from Zion: echoed in later prophets, Jer. xxv. 30; Joel iii. 16. Zion was to Amos the centre of religious authority, the dwelling-place of Yahweh; though his ministry was to the Northern Kingdom his inspiration was from his own.

utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the pastures of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.

3 Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of Damascus, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with

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roar: the image of a lion, iii. 8; Isa. xxxi. 4; Hos. xi. 10, xiii. 7, 8. It is the roar with which the lion springs upon his prey.

pastures of the shepherds: *sc.* his familiar sheep-runs in the desert of Judea. Joel i. 20, ii. 22 note.

the top of Carmel: i. e. the most fruitful and striking hill in the north. The two expressions therefore embrace the whole land. Carmel means the garden-land. It is a headland 1,200 feet high, south of the Bay of Acco or Acre. It is called 'The Carmel,' i. e. the rich garden-ground. Green to the top, covered with trees, 'there is not a flower,' says Vandevelde, quoted by Pusey, 'that I have seen in Galilee or on the plains along the coasts that I do not find here again on Carmel. It is still the same fragrant lovely mountain as of old'; cf. ix. 3; Isa. xxxiii. 9, xxxv. 2; Mic. vii. 14; Nahum i. 4.

i. 3. *The thunder of Yahweh* (that is the meaning of His voice; cf. Exod. ix. 23, 28, 33, 34, xix. 16, xx. 18) *from Zion begins to break over the peoples, one after another, and first over the Aramean Kingdom at Damascus.* This was the most important of Israel's neighbours, and as the Northern one it stood in the line of that Assyrian conquest which was in the prophet's eye. Rimman-nirari III had conquered Mari of Damascus half a century earlier, and by the later incursions of Shalmaneser III, Damascus had been so weakened that Jeroboam had beaten the Syrians and extended his borders to Hamath (2 Kings xiv. 28). But all this was only the withholding, as it were, of the hand of God; for the multiplied transgressions—three, and four (Prov. xxx. 15, 16, 18, 19, 21–3, 29–31, for the expression)—a more terrible punishment is at last to fall—captivity to Kir.

I will not turn away. Punishment is so in the prophet's mind that he does not even express it (the word is the same as in Isa. xliii. 13, rendered 'let it').

Gilead: the border between Laban and Jacob (Gen. xxxi. 44); as the neighbour that was nearest, it suffered most from the Aramean aggression. The **threshing** is the metaphorical description of pitiless raids such as are described in 2 Kings viii. 12, xiii. 7, x. 32.

It is characteristic of Amos, ethically and theologically, that he

threshing instruments of iron: but I will send a fire into 4
the house of Hazael, and it shall devour the palaces of
Ben-hadad. And I will break the bar of Damascus, 5
and cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven, and
him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden:
and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir,
saith the LORD.

represents Yahweh as Lord of all nations, and visiting the sins of each as He would those of Israel; and that the sin to be punished is simply the ordinary cruelty of a conqueror, such as elsewhere was held to be pleasing to the gods.

iron: perhaps basalt, called iron by the Arabs, with which they still make the teeth of threshing instruments which chop the straw into pieces.

4. Hazael and **Ben-hadad,** the two most oppressive kings of Aram (2 Kings x. 32, xiii. 3, 7) who had ravaged Israel, including Gilead.

The phrase **I will send a fire,** &c., is repeated by Hos. viii. 14; so Jer. xvii. 27, xxi. 14, xlix. 27, l. 32.

5. the bar: the breaking of the bar (cf. Deut. iii. 5; 1 Kings iv. 13) laid open the city to the enemy.

the valley of Aven, or 'Vanity,' Hos. iv. 15. LXX has 'On.' Prof. G. A. Smith identifies it with Baalbek ('valley' in this place is *Biḳah*) in the Lebanon[1]. Wellhausen and Nowack doubt this.

house of Eden: the sceptre-holder seems to point to an independent prince. Nowack finds this Beth-Eden, in Bît-Adim, on the middle Euphrates, often mentioned by Assur-nazirbal and Shalmaneser II. The king of Damascus may have had a summer residence there, or perhaps it was a tributary state. Note that in 1 Kings xx. 1, 16 there are thirty-two tributary states of Damascus, and Shalmaneser II in his inscription mentions twelve Hittite kings in alliance with Ben-hadad. This, if correct, is a remarkable light shed on the Bible by Assyriology.

Kir: a place in the remote North, unidentified (Isa. xxii. 6), from which it seems the Arameans originally came; cf. ix. 7. (2 Kings xvi. 9 mentions this prophecy as fulfilled, but the LXX omits it, which suggests a later insertion.) Tiglath-pileser, in his annals 732 B.C., says that he captured Damascus.

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[1] This long and beautiful valley was, as Pusey abundantly shows, crowded with temples and all forms of licentious idolatry, 'valley of vanity.'

6 Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of Gaza, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they carried away captive the whole
7 people, to deliver them up to Edom: but I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, and it shall devour the palaces
8 thereof: and I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon; and I will turn mine hand against Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord GOD.

9 Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of Tyre, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole people to

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i. 6–8. *Now the thunder breaks over Philistia in the extreme South.*

6. Gaza: the most southerly of the great Philistine fortress cities, on the border of Egypt. As a great emporium on several trade-routes, it would be a centre of the slave-traffic. The charge against the Philistine city is that it 'carried away captive a whole people' (cf. Jer. xiii. 19), i. e. raided a district not in war, but, like the Arabs in Africa, as slave-dealers, and these victims they sold to Edom, which was on the route of slave-gangs to the south (Joel iii. 6, 8). A raid of this kind is mentioned in 2 Chron. xxi. 16.

7. Such a calamity to Gaza is mentioned Jer. xlvii. 1. The town cost Alexander the Great two months' siege.

8. Ashdod: thirty-five miles north of Gaza, afterwards Azotus, in 635 B. C. sustained the longest siege in history. Psammetichus king of Egypt besieged it for twenty-nine years (Herod. ii. 157). Its suffering is shown by Jeremiah's expression shortly after, 'remnant of Ashdod.' Both it and Ashkelon occur in the later wars, Maccabean and others.

Ekron: the town on the border of Judah. Gath, the fifth of the famous Philistine towns, is omitted, as Prof. G. A. Smith, in spite of Wellhausen, thinks, because it had been destroyed by Hazael (2 Kings xii. 17). It is referred to in vi. 2, but as destroyed.

remnant: *sc.* the last man. The fulfilment was long delayed. In the times of Nehemiah Ashdod still survived, Neh. iv. 7, xiii. 23.

the Lord GOD: *Adonai Yahweh*, Lord Yahweh: the title occurs twenty times in Amos. Frequent in Ezekiel: cf. Gen. xv. 2, 8; Joshua vii. 7.

9. *The thunder now passes over Tyre.*

delivered up, &c. The same charge as against Gaza; we

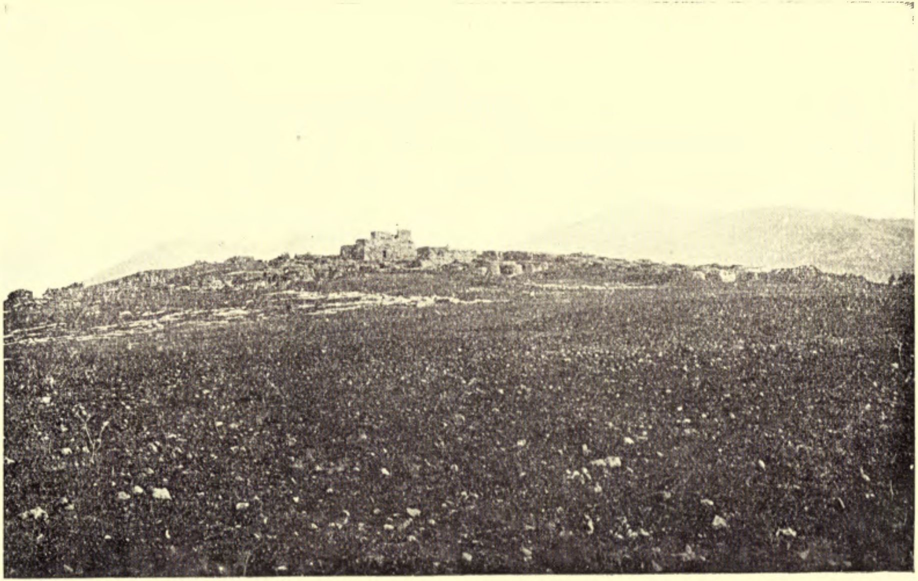

Photo: Pal. Expl. Fund

JEZREEL, WITH MOUNT GILBOA

Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant: but I will send a fire on the wall of Tyre, and it shall 10 devour the palaces thereof.

Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of 11 Edom, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever: but I will 12 send a fire upon Teman, and it shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.

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have no clue to the events referred to. For Tyre taking part in the slave-traffic, see Ezek. xxvii. 13. The **brotherly covenant,** however, as Wellhausen observes, seems to refer to some outrage against Phoenicians and not against Israel. But Wellhausen evidently suspects that the passage is not part of the original. Prof. G. A. Smith mentions that in the next century, under Ezar-haddon (678-676 B.C.) and Assur-banipal, Tyre twice sided with Assyria in repressing her sister cities. Observe the concluding formula **saith the LORD** is omitted.

10. Tyre was burnt by the Assyrians under Sargon, and afterwards by Nebuchadnezzar. Alexander the Great captured it and sold 30,000 of its inhabitants into slavery. It is now a solitude, and has been since the capture by the Saracens in A.D. 1291.

i. 11, 12. *Now the thunder breaks over Edom.* Wellhausen thinks this is a later addition, made after the Exile, when the feeling against Edom was very bitter for rejoicing in the troubles of Israel his brother, Obad. 10. In Amos's time certainly one might have expected Edom to complain of Israel, rather than vice versa (see 2 Sam. viii. 13; 1 Kings xi. 16), and of Judah who prevailed against Edom (2 Kings xiv. 22; 2 Chron. xxvi. 2); Elath or Eloth, on the Red Sea, was in Edom: but cf. 2 Chron. xxviii. 17. But we can hardly reject the passage on these grounds. For fifty years (849 B.C. and onwards) at least Edom was independent of Judah; and it is quite possible that on some occasions he may have exhibited the implacable spirit mentioned here, as after the Exile.

did tear perpetually. Prof. Driver suggests a change in the Hebrew, 'and retained his anger,' as Ps. ciii. 9.

12. Vengeance had fallen on Edom already. Ramman-nirari III (812-783) compelled him to pay tribute to Assyria.

Teman: see Obad. 9. From Ezek. xxv. 13 it seems to have been the northern district of Edom. But it is used for

13 Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge
14 their border: but I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, with shouting in the day of battle, with a tempest in the day
15 of the whirlwind: and their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together, saith the LORD.

2 Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of

Edom, a part for the whole, Jer. xlix. 7; Hab. iii. 3: cf. Jer. xlix. 20; Gen. xxxvi. 34. Eliphaz was a Temanite, Job ii. 11, &c. For this coupling of a country with a city cf. Isa. xxxiv. 6, lxiii. 1. It is possible that Bozrah was a city in Teman, Isa. xxxiv. 6; Jer. xlix. 13, 22; perhaps it is to be identified with El-Busaireh, thirty-five miles north of Petra, twenty miles south-east of the Dead Sea.

i. 13–15. *Now the thunder breaks over Ammon.* It seems as if the Ammonites from the south had combined with the Aramaeans from the north (i. 3) to enlarge their territory by a deliberate extermination of the Gileadites. Such atrocities still occur where the Turk rules: let us hope the word of the prophet applies also to him.

14. Rabbah: Deut. iii. 11, later Philadelphia, now 'Ammân, twenty-five miles north-east of the Dead Sea. The only Ammonite city mentioned in the O. T.

tempest . . . whirlwind: synonyms, Num. xxi. 14 (marg.), used metaphorically for the storm of war and siege.

15. their king: Heb. *Malcham*, is, when pointed *Milchom*, the name of the chief Ammonite god, 1 Kings xi. 5; Jer. xlviii. 7, xlix. 3. The LXX reads also 'and his priests.' Perhaps therefore the original was 'Milchom and his priests and princes.' This final punishment of Ammon was long deferred, as the post-exilic experience shows. But now vast ruins of flourishing cities mark the place where Israel's hated kinsman once reigned.

ii. 1–3. *The thunder now breaks over Moab.* It is very characteristic of Amos that the punishment falls on Moab, not for his endless inroads and devastations on Israel, but for a deed of impiety, not otherwise known, against a king of Edom, Israel's foe. Nothing could better show the ethical and theological impartiality of the prophetic word in Amos.

Moab, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of
Edom into lime: but I will send a fire upon Moab, 2
and it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth; and Moab
shall die with tumult, with shouting, and with the sound
of the trumpet: and I will cut off the judge from the 3
midst thereof, and will slay all the princes thereof with
him, saith the LORD.

Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of 4
Judah, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punish-

In 2 Kings iii. 26 we have a case of Edom siding with Israel against Moab. And it is conceivable that the outrage on the Edomite king's bones occurred then (2 Kings xxiii. 16). The *nephesh*, or soul, was in the primitive Semitic faith so identified with the body that to burn the one was to destroy the other.

2. Kerioth: *lit.* 'cities'; the capital was perhaps composed of several absorbed towns like London. Jer. xlviii. 24, 41; Mesa's Inscription 10 (2 Kings iii. 4). Dr. Löwy, however, has shown that the famous Moabite stone is a forgery.

with tumult: Jer. xlviii. 45 calls the Moabites 'sons of tumult.'

trumpet: *shophar*, a curved horn of a cow or ram, to be distinguished from the straight metal trumpet (*hatzotzerah*). The two instruments are confused in our Bible, except where *shophar* and *hatzotzerah* occur together, as in Hos. v. 8, where the *shophar* is rendered 'trumpet.'

3. the judge: the ruler of Moab, 2 Kings xv. 5; perhaps the vassal of Jeroboam II.

thereof. Our R. V. ingeniously covers the difficulty of the feminine in the Heb. 'her midst,' 'her princes,' for Moab is masculine. Nowack corrects the text; Prof. G. A. Smith understands 'the land's.' Moab was destroyed in the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar.

Thus Amos has uttered Yahweh's judgement on the cruelties, slave-raids, exterminations, &c., which were always staining those Semitic tribes. And now the thunder draws nearer home and falls on Judah, not for these wild excesses of the heathen, but for neglect of the law; and on Israel, not for offences against other nations, but for vices and oppressions within his own borders.

ii. 4, 5. *The thunder over Judah.* Duhm, *Die Theologie der Propheten*, p. 119, first argued that this is an interpolation; Wellhausen agrees. Against these critics, and their subjective arguments, we

ment thereof; because they have rejected the law of the LORD, and have not kept his statutes, and their lies have caused them to err, after the which their fathers
5 did walk: but I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.
6 Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of

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may set Robertson Smith and Kuenen. The only objection is that the charge against Judah is rather tame and general after the very pointed complaints against the other nations.

the law: not necessarily the Pentateuch, but possibly the more primitive code, the Book of the Covenant, Exod. xxi–xxiii; or more generally still, the 'direction' given by the priests as occasion arose: Lev. vi. 9; Jer. xviii. 18.

their lies: i. e. idols. Cf. 2 Kings xvii. 15; Jer. ii. 5.

5. a fire upon Judah: fulfilled in 586 B.C., when the Chaldeans took the city (2 Kings xxv. 9).

We may agree with Nowack that this insertion of the threat to Judah rather breaks the movement of the storm from the nations to Israel, and from a dramatic point of view it might be better excluded. But there is no showing that Amos himself, a man of Judah, did not purposely insert this germ of rebuke out of which much of the later denunciations of Judah grew. And for Amos of Tekoa never to mention Judah would be an anomaly demanding explanation.

ii. 6–16. *Now the thunder crashes over guilty Israel.*

6. The formula is the same for Israel as for the heathen, but the guilt of Israel is far greater, the sins viler, the ingratitude (verses 9–11) incomparable. The first crime is 'selling the righteous for silver.' This is not said of the judges (Driver, *Camb. Bible*), who are not mentioned, but of the people generally. Rich men sold into slavery poor, honest people whom they got into their hands. The law (Lev. xxv. 39; Deut. xv. 12) allowed a poor man to sell himself into slavery[1]. The second crime is that they 'sold the needy for a pair of shoes,' i. e., says Prof. G. A. Smith, 'for an old song' as we should say. But that is an inadequate interpretation, which would do well if it had been 'estimated at an old song,' but the selling shows that these covetous men would get what they could, as much, not as little. Mr. Box (*Expos. Times*, xii. 378) suggests that here and in viii. 6 the phrase is connected with the practice of selling land by the transfer of a shoe, Ruth iv. 7;

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[1] On the other hand, the law did not allow the sale of an insolvent debtor, which is here contemplated (2 Kings iv. 1; Neh. v. 5; Matt. xviii. 25).

Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes: that pant after 7
the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go unto the *same* maid, to profane my holy name:

Ps. vi. 10. He quotes the LXX of 1 Sam. xii. 3: 'Of whose hand have I received a bribe or a pair of shoes?' The shoe may therefore be regarded as the title-deed of the poor man's inheritance which the rich man has appropriated.

The best parallel to this is Isa. v. 8. It is the age-long oppression of the poor, whose poverty is their ruin; for money and property they are sacrificed and sold. Wellhausen and Nowack, however, think that the 'righteous' is to be taken in a juristic sense, and the selling is the perversion of justice for a bribe. Their authority, especially supported by Driver, is very weighty; but the interpretation above advocated yields a much clearer sense, and escapes the necessity of shifting from the unjust judge to the rapacious creditor in the two clauses of one sentence, which Prof. Driver's explanation requires.

7. The third crime is, according to our text, very obscure. **That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor.** This could only mean that the land-hunger is so great that they desire even the dust which rests on the poor man's head, perhaps sprinkled on it as a sign of mourning—a very extravagant mode of speech! But getting at the rendering which the LXX suggests, Prof. G. A. Smith gives us: 'who trample to the dust of the earth the head of the poor'; this is quite intelligible of the proud and callous rich. And on it the next clause follows naturally, 'and pervert the way of humble men' (cf. Job xxiv. 4; Prov. xvii. 23). The **meek** are the humble followers of Yahweh (Isa. xi. 4, xxix. 19, xxxii. 7). The fourth crime is unchastity, probably in the corrupted worship. The sacred prostitutes of the Phoenician worship are called *Kedeshoth* (fem.) and *Kedeshim* (masc.): Gen. xxxviii. 21–22; 1 Kings xiv. 24, xv. 12, xxii. 46; 2 Kings xxiii. 7; Hos. iv. 14. Deut. xxiii. 17 forbids the abominable practice. Such a prostitute, introduced into Yahweh-worship, offering herself, or himself, indiscriminately at the shrine, would lead to this abomination without the knowledge of the perpetrators. That the misguided act of worship is intended appears from the indignant words **to profane my holy name,** the **to** expressing not the intention, but the inevitable result; for the profanation of the Name see Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 3; Isa. xlviii. 11; Ezek. xx. 9, 14, xxxvi. 20–23.

8 and they lay themselves down beside every altar upon
clothes taken in pledge, and in the house of their God
9 they drink the wine of such as have been fined. Yet
destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was
like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the
oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots

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8. The fifth crime is keeping the garment of the poor as a pledge (cf. Exod. xxii. 25-27; Deut. xxiv. 12, 13). The large outer cloak (*salmah*) was, and is still, used in Arabia and Palestine as the defence by night as well as by day. With this the Arab is quite content: at night he can wrap himself up and sleep wherever he is, but without this he has lost not only clothes, but bed and sleep and shelter.

beside every altar (iii. 14, viii. 14; Hos. viii. 11, x. 1, 2, 8, xii. 11). The law of the one altar in Deuteronomy was not yet promulgated. But these lawless oppressors heaped the pledge garments to lie on in their religious feasts—such was their moral obfuscation!

the wine of such as have been fined. The fines exacted, perhaps in justice, from poor defaulters, are ill-used for the luxurious feasts, professedly religious, of the rich.

their God. They suppose it is Yahweh; but it is really a god of their own. When we worship God with iniquity, we cease to worship Him; we have made another god, and are bringing to our idol His proper service.

9-12. Now against these five crimes which polluted Israel the prophet sets the grace of Yahweh which chose, delivered, and settled Israel in his land. What brings Israel's sins out in such terrible relief is that Yahweh had dealt with him as He had with no other nation.

9. The ingratitude, that conduct so evil should repay the mighty acts of the grace of Yahweh. The Amorite stands for all the inhabitants of Canaan on both sides of Jordan, before the invasion of Israel (Gen. xlviii. 22; Deut. i. 20, 27; Joshua xxiv. 8; 1 Sam. vii. 14; 2 Sam. xxi. 2). Their legendary origin is given in Gen. x. 16.

height of the cedars. For the reputed size of the aborigines of Canaan see Num. xiii. 22, 32; Deut. i. 28, iii. 11; Joshua xii. 4, xiii. 12.

fruit from above. From the comparison with the cedars it is a natural image to think of the Amorite as a blasted tree: cf. Job xviii. 16; Isa. xxxvii. 31; Ezek. xvii. 9; Hos. ix. 16. The inscription on the tomb of Eshmunazar, king of Sidon: 'May he

from beneath. Also I brought you up out of the land 10
of Egypt, and led you forty years in the wilderness, to
possess the land of the Amorite. And I raised up of 11
your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazi-
rites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith
the LORD. But ye gave the Nazirites wine to drink; 12
and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not.

(who violates the tomb) have no root beneath or fruit above, or any beauty among the living under the sun.'

10. Was it for this life of luxury, oppression, and greed that Yahweh brought His people out of Egypt? (cf. v. 25). This argument of the Exodus rings through the law, Exod. xx. 2; Deut. v. 6, vi. 12: cf. Hos. xiii. 4.

forty years: Deut. ii. 7, viii. 2, xxix. 5.

11. Of all God's gifts the greatest is the inspired or the devout man. Note it is not Moses and the law that are referred to; from the standpoint of Amos the prophet precedes the law. The Nazirite, like the sons of Rechab, was a man pledged to abstinence from drink, who wore his hair long as a symbol of his dedication to Yahweh, and set an example of abstemiousness and simplicity in a luxurious age.

prophets: e.g. Samuel, Ahijah, 1 Kings xiv. 2, 4; Jehu, 1 Kings xvi. 1, 7, 12; Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 8, 18.

Nazirite: such apparently was Samuel at first (1 Sam. i. 11); Samson is the one certain historical instance (Judges xiii—xvi). As Num. vi. 1-21 shows, the word *nazir* means 'separated.' Lam. iv. 7 perhaps shows the good results of abstinence.

saith the LORD: *lit.* 'Yahweh's whisper, or oracle'; the common word for a revelation to a prophet.

It is striking, and perhaps an evidence that the priestly legislation of the Pentateuch was not yet known, that Amos does not mention the priest, but the Nazirite whose life of separation involved no priestly function, but was not less strict than that of the later priesthood. The best N.T. comment is Heb. xiii. 13.

12. gave . . . drink. These apostles and examples of abstinence were in the age of luxury seduced into the common practices.

Prophesy not: cf. vii. 13; but he is thinking of Elijah persecuted by Ahab or Micaiah-ben-Imlah, 1 Kings xxii. 26, 27: see 2 Chron. xvi. 7, 10; Hos. vi. 5, ix. 7, 8. So our Lord gives this as the capital crime of the Jews, Matt. xxiii. 37.

It is a pertinent and impressive question: How far do these words (verses 6-12) describe our own condition in England and America, where the destruction of the poor is their poverty, and

13 Behold, I will press *you* in your place, as a cart presseth
14 that is full of sheaves. And flight shall perish from the
swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force,
15 neither shall the mighty deliver himself: neither shall
he stand that handleth the bow; and he that is swift of

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the vast accumulations of thoughtless wealth leave or make the 'submerged tenth'; where God's messengers are constantly absorbed in the luxurious world, or silenced and disregarded by the polite scepticism which flourishes with luxury?

ii. 13. *A vision of immediate judgement.*

13. I will press. The uncertainty shown in the margin is due to the fact that the Hebrew word used here is not found elsewhere, and its meaning is conjectural. It seems, however, better to guess a meaning, than with Wellhausen, following Hitzig, to write another Hebrew word, especially as the meaning he gets is after all not very appropriate: (1) 'I make the earth shake under you, as a wagon shakes which is full of sheaves.' It is doubtful, says Wellhausen, whether wagons were used for the harvest in Palestine, but the image might be borrowed from another quarter; and Prof. G. A. Smith refers to 1 Sam. vi. 7 to show that they were used. (2) Our R. V. gives a tolerable meaning: under the shock of war the people will be crushed down as anything would be in the path of a laden wagon. But this leaves the translation of the Hebrew 'under you' by **in your place** very forced, though there is a parallel in the Hebrew of Job xxxvi. 16, xl. 12; also Judges vii. 21; Isa. xxv. 10. (3) The image that is wanted, though it can only be wrung out of the Hebrew words, is 'I will constrain you, as the wagon constrains the sheaves,' i. e. they shall be carried off to judgement in exile, as the sheaves of the harvest are carried away in the cart, to be ground and eaten. The margin follows the A.V., and Pusey agrees; but the rendering is not in keeping with the threats in the context. It refers to the familiar figure in the O. T. of Yahweh being pressed and burdened with the sins of His people (cf. Isa. xliii. 24; Mal. ii. 17). It is, however, doubtful whether the verb in the Hiphil, whatever the root might mean, could carry this passive or reflective sense.

14. The connexion of thought greatly favours the second interpretation. The pressure of Yahweh, fighting against His people, constitutes an irremediable doom.

flight: or 'refuge,' as in margin (cf. Job xi. 20; Ps. cxlii. 4; Jer. xxv. 35); the word is used of God in 2 Sam. xxii. 3; Ps. lix. 17; Jer. xvi. 19.

15, 16. This headlong flight and ruin show how the storm of foot shall not deliver *himself*: neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself: and he that is courageous 16 among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day, saith the LORD.

Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against 3 you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt, saying, You only 2 have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore

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vengeance which has rolled over the surrounding nations is most severe of all over Israel.

The forecast was fulfilled in the Assyrian invasion. Amos is the first prophet of the Assyrian period; but even Isaiah in his earlier prophecies abstained from mentioning the terrible name, Asshur.

saith the LORD: rather, 'the oracle of the Lord,' verse 11.

SECTION II.

iii—vi. The marks of these rather loosely connected oracles are the 'Hear this word' (iii. 1, iv. 1, v. 1) and the two 'Woes' (v. 18, vi. 1). It may conduce to clearness if we mark the paragraphs thus:—

(1) iii. 1, 2. *The theme and motto of all Amos's prophecies.*

(2) iii. 3-8. *The certainty of the prophecies, grounded on the prophet's inspiration.*

(3) iii. 9—iv. 3. *A threat of doom and exile.*

(4) iv. 4-13. *How the dealings of Yahweh have failed of their effect.*

(5) v. 1-17. *Another threat of doom and desolation.*

(6) v. 18—vi. 14. *Woes and threats of judgement and exile.*

See Introduction for another analysis.

1, 2. the whole family: this includes Judah, though Amos's mission was only to Israel. Jer. viii. 3; Mic. ii. 3 use family for a nation.

families of the earth: *lit.* 'ground' (Heb. *adamah*), as if to mark the lowly origin of these creatures whom Yahweh condescends to 'know' (Gen. xviii. 19; Hos. xiii. 5).

therefore I will visit. This is the amazing new note of prophecy. Israel's boast was that he was the favourite, the chosen, the only intimately known, of Yahweh. The prophet accepts the boast, and declares, 'therefore Yahweh will punish Israel for his iniquities,' the most guilty because the most favoured nation. It sounds terrible, but, though Amos does not say it, to be punished is a blessing; so only is the sinner warned and saved. Pusey compares the prayer of Augustine, 'Burn, cut here;

3 I will visit upon you all your iniquities. Shall two walk
4 together, except they have agreed? Will a lion roar in
the forest, when he hath no prey? will a young lion cry
5 out of his den, if he have taken nothing? Can a bird
fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is *set* for
him? shall a snare spring up from the ground, and have
6 taken nothing at all? Shall the trumpet be blown in a city,

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and spare for ever.' But this carries us far from Amos into the N. T., with its doctrine of the Father scourging the son whom He receiveth: cf. Jer. vii. 3-15.

visit upon: Exod. xx. 5; Jer. v. 9, 29, &c.

3. So revolutionary an announcement, striking at all the pride of the privileged people, demands some authentication of the prophet's office; and verses 3-8 give in a series of brief figures the ground on which he claims to be heard. An effect implies a cause; the prophet's utterance implies Yahweh's prompting. The images are drawn from the herdman's experiences in the life of the desert.

except they have agreed. In the desert, which is trackless, if two men are together it is because they have agreed to meet; otherwise they would no more go together than ships on the sea; so Yahweh and the prophet are met in this ominous task of prediction to Israel. This sense is assured by verse 7, though Nowack disallows it.

Will a lion roar. . . . ? In the silence of the desert the ominous roar of the lion shows that he has sprung on his prey, and the growl of satisfaction in the lair proves that something has been captured; so the voice of the prophet indicates the fell purpose of Yahweh, and the certainty of His carrying it out. Cf. i. 2 for this comparison of Yahweh with the king of beasts; it was perhaps in that terrific sound of nature that Amos first became conscious of the awful voice of God.

5. fall in a snare upon the earth. LXX omits 'a snare,' and that makes the words clearer. The **gin** is a net, which when the bird is immeshed is brought down. The 'snare,' on the other hand, is a trap which springs up and catches the bird which has unwarily touched the bait. The 'snare' has got into the first clause by an oversight. The point of the image is: as the captured bird proves that the snare was there, so the utterance of the prophet proves the designs, perhaps hidden, of Yahweh: the snap of the spring shows that something is taken, the voice of Yahweh will not fail of its effect.

6. trumpet: rather 'horn,' *shophar* (ii. 2), always the war-

and the people not be afraid? shall evil befall a city, and
the LORD hath not done it? Surely the Lord GOD will 7
do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants
the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? 8
the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?
Publish ye in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces 9

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trumpet. The prophet's warning is as when the trumpet on the ridged city warned the people of an Arab raid (cf. Jer. vi. 1; Ezek. xxxiii. 3; Hos. v. 8; 1 Cor. xiv. 8).

evil: i. e. calamity. No evil of this kind can be, or be announced, without Yahweh's permission or command. And not only so, but

7. he revealeth his secret. Surely, rather 'for.' It is Yahweh's principle to announce the evil by His prophets, that the opportunity of repentance may be given.

Secret: Heb. *sōd* (Prov. xxv. 9), friendly conversation, Ps. lv. 14; so friendliness, Job xxix. 4; Ps. xxv. 14; Prov. iii. 32; and a council of friends, Job xix. 19; Jer. xv. 17. See especially Jer. xxiii. 18, 22.

8. who can but prophesy? Nowack, following Wellhausen, alters the word into 'be frightened,' in order to improve the parallelism. But that is unnecessary, as well as inadmissible. We need not press the parallelism of the two clauses. They stand each by itself. There are two thoughts: the roar of Yahweh must instil fear, and the voice of Yahweh must find expression in a prophet who hears and understands.

Thus it will be seen that Amos gives as his credentials in the last resort the strong conviction of his self-consciousness, just such credentials as our Lord offered when he said that the Father and he bore witness to him. That is all a prophet can do to authenticate his message; he lays bare his bosom and allows men to see the unalterable certainty, sure as Cause and Effect, that it is God in his soul, God speaking and acting within him, that produces the utterance. The images are drawn from the desert, because it was in that solitude and in presence of these facts that the conviction of Yahweh speaking to him had laid hold of him (see vii. 14, 15).

iii. 9—iv. 3. This denunciation is directed not against the people as a whole, but against the capital, Samaria, the head and centre of luxury and oppression. The very heathen are summoned to testify if justice rules in Samaria.

9. in the palaces: rather, 'on,' that is, 'from,' the roofs.

Ashdod. LXX reads Assyria, which is a better parallel to Egypt, but Amos never mentions Assyria by name. Ashdod and

in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold what great tumults are therein, and what oppressions in the midst thereof.
10 For they know not to do right, saith the LORD, who
11 store up violence and robbery in their palaces. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: An adversary *there shall be*, even round about the land: and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled.
12 Thus saith the LORD: As the shepherd rescueth out

Egypt stand for the heathen enemies of Israel, who are summoned to see her shame (2 Sam. i. 20).

upon the mountains. Samaria stood on a hill 1,000 ft. high in a basin of high mountains, about five miles in diameter. The enemies from these surrounding heights were to look down on the shame in the city.

tumults: the restlessness of avarice and other passions, Prov. xv. 16; Ezek. xxii. 5.

10. they know not. The moral sense is gone. Their blindness is shown in this: they think they are storing up treasure, but it is only violence and robbery, the sure marks of an approaching Nemesis.

right (a rare word): 2 Sam. xv. 3; Isa. xxvi. 10, lix. 14.

11. The punishment is an enemy **round about the land,** i. e. blockading it on all sides, and the palaces filled by violence and robbery will be spoiled by the violent and robbers. This was spoken in 755. In 734 Tiglath-Pileser swept Gilead and Galilee; in 724 Shalmaneser overran Northern Israel. For three years the mount of Samaria was invested, and then it was taken. The palaces were overthrown, the rich and delicate were carried captive.

12. As the shepherd, &c. To illustrate the mere remnant which shall be left from the captivity of Samaria the herdman again draws on his desert experience, the sight of a lion which has devoured the sheep, all but two legs (*lit.* 'shin-bones') or even all but the ear-tip. It is vivid, and even grotesque, as we might expect from a rustic prophet. Exod. xxii. 13 shows the motive which the herdman might have for rescuing the remnant; it would show that the animal had been really devoured by a wild beast.

The Fathers allegorized this, as everything; e. g. Gregory says: 'The legs denote desire, whereby, as by certain steps, the soul approacheth to God, or departeth from Him. Yet, if a soul would be saved, desires suffice not, but if to these obedience to

of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear;
so shall the children of Israel be rescued that sit in
Samaria in the corner of a couch, and on the silken
cushions of a bed. Hear ye, and testify against the 13
house of Jacob, saith the Lord God, the God of hosts.
For in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of 14
Israel upon him, I will also visit the altars of Beth-el,

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the heavenly commands be added, it shall be rescued from the mouth of the lion.' This is, of course, not exegesis but homiletics.

that sit in Samaria, &c. This is a description, from the austere herdman's point of view, of the luxurious nobles of the capital. To dwell even in a house was luxury to one who knew only a desert-tent; to sit on a couch or a divan was effeminate to one who was accustomed to wrap himself in his cloak (*salmah*) and lie on the ground.

corner of a couch: i. e. the comfortable corner of the room where the two arms of the divan met.

on the silken cushions of a bed. The word 'silken cushions' in the Hebrew is 'in Damascus,' and the meaning of R.V. is only obtained forcibly by supposing some Damascene product to be meant (cf. our own 'damask,' and Arabic *dimshaq*). Our Revisers followed Gesenius, Hitzig, and Ewald.

It is curious that in Gen. xv. 2 this same word, *Demeshek*, occurs as an adjective, 'Dammesek Eliezer.' And though the parallel does not give us any meaning here, it justifies us in translating 'on a damask bed,' without knowing exactly what that means. Wellhausen and Nowack think the text corrupt.

13. Hear ye. The nobles of Philistia and Egypt are addressed (verse 9).

the Lord GOD, the God of hosts. This is He who is speaking through the herdman. Amos always uses this majestic designation (iv. 13, v. 14, 15, vi. 8, 14, ix. 5; so Hos. xii. 5). The hosts, says Wellhausen, are not the stars, nor the Israelites, but probably the world and all that is therein, perhaps especially the host of spirits. It is probable that Amos was the first to use the title which subsequent prophets adopted (Jer. v. 14, xv. 16, xxxv. 17, xxxviii. 17, xliv. 7). It equals the Omnipotent (Driver), *κύριος παντοκράτωρ* (LXX).

the altars of Beth-el. Nowack arbitrarily considers this clause an interpolation, because the threat is against Samaria and its palaces, not against Beth-el. But of course Beth-el, and Jeroboam's altar or altars, were to Samaria as Canterbury is to London. The corrupt worship there was the head and front of

and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to
15 the ground. And I will smite the winter house with the
summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish,
and the great houses shall have an end, saith the LORD.
4 Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the
mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which
crush the needy, which say unto their lords, Bring,

Israel's offence. No lightning of God could fall on Samaria without glancing at Beth-el, the centre of the national religion and of its corruption.

horns of the altar. The first Jeroboam in raising his apostate altar had imitated the one in Jerusalem with the horns, or pillars a cubit high at the corners, for the sacrifice and the atoning (Exod. xxix. 12; Ps. cxviii. 27). A stele from Teima (South-East Edom) shows the horns of an altar curving like those of an ox. These symbols of redemption, the altars which were to save, should be the first things to fall in the visitation of God.

15. winter house . . . summer house. The herdman has a special animus against these elaborate dwellings—to him they symbolized pride, self-indulgence, and departure from God. Jer. xxxvi. 22 is the only instance known to us in Israel of the winter house, with southern aspect; but the practice of having separate houses for winter and summer must have prevailed.

houses of ivory: i. e. panelled or inlaid with ivory, like Ahab's: 1 Kings xxii. 39; cf. Ps. xlv. 8.

great houses: rather, 'many.' The desolation shall be wide, if not general. These are not the king's palaces, but the mansions of the great.

saith the LORD: see ii. 11.

iv. 1. kine of Bashan: by this he means—and what a sarcasm it is!—the women of Israel, whose luxury, as so often, is the underlying cause of the excesses of **their lords.** Bashan, east of Jordan, was famous for its pastures and breed of cattle and sheep (Deut. xxxii. 14; Ps. xxii. 12; Ezek. xxxix. 18).

oppress the poor (for the phrases cf. 1 Sam. xii. 3, 4; Deut. xxviii. 33), not perhaps deliberately; but all idle luxury at one end of the social scale involves poverty and suffering at the other. And for this unintentional and unconscious cruelty we are held to blame. When the rich lady demands the luxurious appurtenances of her table and toilet from her husband, she is robbing the poor, even though her husband obtains the means of indulgence by legitimate business. It is a searching thought.

and let us drink. The Lord God hath sworn by his 2
holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that
they shall take you away with hooks, and your residue
with fish hooks. And ye shall go out at the breaches, 3
every one straight before her; and ye shall cast *yourselves*
into Harmon, saith the Lord.

Come to Beth-el, and transgress; to Gilgal, *and* 4
multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every

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2. The punishment is exile. It is sworn by the holiness of God, as Ps. lxxxix. 35 (cf. vi. 8).

hooks: the image is from fishing. But in the Assyrian monuments we see captives dragged literally with hooks in their mouths (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11 (marg.); Job xl. 24, xli. 2; Isa. xxxvii. 29; Ezek. xxix. 4).

3. breaches: i.e. of the wall of captured Samaria. The captive women go out like cows, each one straight before her (Joshua vi. 5, 20).

Harmon. The place and the allusion are quite unknown. Peshitto, Symmachus, Jerome, took it to mean Armenia; LXX has 'mount Rhomman.' Ewald found in this 'ye shall cast the Rimmon (i.e. the Syrian goddess of love) to the mountain.' Hitzig altered the text and got Hadad-Rimmon; the women were to be prostituted in the cult of that goddess; but we do not know a place called Hadad-Rimmon.

On the whole, we are obliged to leave the passage in obscurity: a threat is often not less terrible because it is unintelligible.

iv. 4-13. *How the dealings of Yahweh have failed of their effect.* The address was perhaps given at some great religious festival.

4, 5. This is gravely ironical, like our Lord's 'Fill ye up the measure of your fathers,' Matt. xxiii. 32, or like Rev. xxii. 11. The Divine irony is moved when external religion is mocked by the inner condition of the heart. Israel was punctilious in the performance of the ritual, which may be most punctual when all moral and spiritual reality has gone out of it.

Come to Beth-el, &c. The charge against Israel is not schism but unreality; the denunciation is parallel to Isaiah's reproach of Judah, Isa. i. 14. The charge is that, while they offer their worship in Beth-el, their social and personal sins continue. Amos's revelation is, 'ritual worship is no tie with God, unless obedience, devotion, and goodness go with it.'

4. multiply transgression. The more zealous the worship, apart from moral conformity to the will of God, the greater the sin (cf. Hos. iv. 8, viii. 11).

5 morning, *and* your tithes every three days; and offer
a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened,
and proclaim freewill offerings and publish them: for
this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord
6 God. And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in

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every morning: instead of once a year (1 Sam. i. 3, 7, 21).
tithes every three days: instead of every three years (Deut. xiv. 28, xxvi. 12), such was the outward zeal of these unspiritual ritualists! Beth-el and Gilgal, with Beer-sheba, were the great religious centres of the Northern Kingdom (cf. v. 5 and Hos. iv. 15, ix. 15, xii. 11). Wellhausen and Nowack think that the Hebrew can only mean 'bring your sacrifices in the morning, and your tithes three days after,' a description of the course actually pursued at that time.

5. that which is leavened: cf. Lev. vii. 13. It was probably a new and refined form of offering, instead of the old rude unleavened cakes. Later it was forbidden to offer meal with leaven (Exod. xxiii. 18; Lev. ii. 11, vi. 17), but there is nothing to show that Amos knew the developed Levitical law. So Wellhausen and Nowack. Pusey, of course, took the offering of leaven to be the sin; he did not recognize the historic growth in the Pentateuch.

thanksgiving: the *tôdāh*, Lev. vii. 12, 13, 15, xxii. 29; Ps. lvi. 12; Jer. xvii. 26, xxxiii. 11.

proclaim . . . and publish: not necessarily in an ostentatious way; it only refers to the general invitation to the people to bring the offerings and share in the feast. Prof. G. A. Smith, therefore, though supported by Driver, is surely mistaken in quoting Matt. vi. 2; that is a remnant of the false view that the worship at Beth-el and Gilgal was heterodox or disorderly; but the point rather is, it was peculiarly zealous and earnest, its fault lying in the fact that it was offered by polluted hands and godless hearts.

freewill offerings: Deut. xii. 6, 17.

this liketh you, not Me, saith Yahweh. 'Liketh' for 'pleaseth' is Old English (see Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*).

6. And I also (cf. Gen. xx. 6; Judges ii. 3, 21; 2 Sam. xii. 13; Ps. lii. 5): the meaning rather is: 'While you were offering your ritual worship, I on my part was trying by chastisement to rouse you to a sense of your sin, though in vain.' Because these disciplines of famine and drought and pestilence have failed, the sterner punishment of exile was necessary.

cleanness of teeth: because there was nothing to eat. (LXX reads *kahayon* for *nikyon*, i. e. teeth set on edge, cf. Jer. xxxi. 29.) 1 Kings viii. 37, xviii. 2; 2 Kings iv. 38, viii. 1-6, for famines.

all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet
have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. And 7
I also have withholden the rain from you, when there were
yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain
upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another
city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece where-upon it rained not withered. So two or three cities 8
wandered unto one city to drink water, and were not
satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the
LORD. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: 9
the multitude of your gardens and your vineyards and
your fig trees and your olive trees hath the palmerworm
devoured: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the
LORD. I have sent among you the pestilence after the 10

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not returned: for the pathetic refrain cf. Isa. ix. 12, 17, 21, x. 4.

7. Then drought. The harvest is in April and May. The rain (Heb. *geshem*, not *matar*) was therefore the early or October rain, essential in Palestine to secure a harvest. In January or February it had not yet come (Nowack); cf. Joel ii. 23.

one city . . . not . . . another: in contrast with the general famine in verse 6. On one occasion Thomson found the ground in the Jordan valley like a desert, while at Tiberias the whole country was a paradise of herbs and flowers. This partial rainfall is characteristic of Palestine (*Land and Book*, p. 395). We must suppose that there was a moral discrimination, and the more guilty cities were left without rain; but history does not help us here.

8. wandered: rather, 'tottered,' in the weakness of thirst, as Ps. lix. 15: cf. Ps. cvii. 27; Isa. xxiv. 20, xxix. 9.

9. Then the blasting, the mildew, and the locust, such as Joel describes: cf. Deut. xxviii. 22; 1 Kings viii. 37; Hag. ii. 17.

palmerworm: *gazam*, shearer = locust (Joel i. 4). The blasting caused by the hot east wind (Arab. *sherkiyeh*), the mildew which blanched the corn, and locust swarms, were and are frequent enough in Palestine to serve as perpetual judgements.

10. pestilence: Lev. xxvi. 25; Deut. xxviii. 21, 27, 60; Ps. xci. 3, 6; Jer. xiv. 12, xxi. 7, 9, &c.: said to have its origin in Egypt, Isa. x. 24, 26.

manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with
the sword, and have carried away your horses; and I
have made the stink of your camp to come up even into
your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith
11 the LORD. I have overthrown *some* among you, as
when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye
were as a brand plucked out of the burning: yet have
12 ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. Therefore
thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: *and* because I will
do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

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your young men: cf. 2 Kings x. 32, xiii. 7, xiv. 26: the invasion of Hazael.

horses: coupled with the men, it shows how they were valued in Israel; they were imported from Egypt or Syria (2 Kings xiii. 7).

stink: of unburied corpses, Isa. xxxiv. 3.

11. The worst judgement of all, earthquake (cf. viii. 8); referred to in i. 1; Zech. xiv. 5.

God overthrew: Gen. xix. 24-28: cf. Deut. xxix. 23; Isa. xiii. 19; Jer. xlix. 18; this is rather strange in the mouth of Yahweh. Perhaps, as Wellhausen supposes, Gen. xviii. 19 is a story not peculiar to Israel, but belonging to the general traditions of mankind; thus the general name 'God' would be more appropriate than Yahweh, Israel's God.

brand: Zech. iii. 2; for the thought, see Isa. i. 9.

Prof. G. A. Smith quotes *The Vision of Piers Plowman* to illustrate the view that these national calamities were the judgements of God for national sin. The poet and the prophet are needed for insight into this truth.

The contrast between the people bringing their elaborate worship and Yahweh sending His punitive judgements is only relieved from terror by the thought that the judgements are to form character, and to redeem the lost. But in Israel's case all the judgements have failed, and only the extremity of suffering remains.

12. thus . . . this: what it is we are not told. Pusey thinks the silence more impressive than if the nature of the penalty had been named. Nowack thinks that a clause has fallen out. But if the 'thus' cannot refer to the Exile, which has been frequently named and is always in the prophet's mind, it may apply to the passage which follows v. 1, &c. And this view is the more probable if we are, with modern commentators, to regard verse 13 as a later insertion.

For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth; the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name. 13

prepare to meet thy God. Nowack thinks this clause is out of place, and urges that the Hebrew for 'thy God,' *Eloheika*, is improbable, because Amos avoids the name *Elohim*. But these subjective difficulties are swept away by the curt majesty of the utterance. Nothing could be grander than this: 'The judgements of God have failed to impress you; now He Himself will confront the guilty people.' And it is the power of this sudden turn which makes one most reluctant to surrender (on mere subjective grounds) the splendid delineation, self-delineation, of Yahweh, God of hosts, in verse 13.

13. Wellhausen says the verse comes from the interpolator of v. 8, 9, ix. 5, 6; Hos. xiii. 4. Nowack urges, partly on linguistic grounds, that all these doxologies in the earlier prophets date from the time of the Second Isaiah. He says the word *bara*, 'create,' was not used before the time of Jeremiah; it means properly 'to cut,' as Joshua xvii. 15, 18; and *secho*, **his thought,** belongs to the later speech[1]. But if this insertion was made, it was finely made; it was itself an inspiration. It carries us at once to the great truth brought out by Mr. Illingworth in his *Divine Immanence* (p. 62), that 'the prima facie aspect of the world conduces to spiritual belief.' The heavens declare, the earth witnesses. Doubt and denial are afterthoughts. The Power in Nature is God. The Maker of mountains and winds, who brings the clouds over the morning, and rides on the summits of things, is also the Spirit within man that interprets his thought. The God whom Israel is to meet is the Maker of heaven and earth, who also witnesses in every conscious breast.

mountains: LXX, 'the thunder.'

wind: or 'spirit.'

his thought: perhaps God's thought (cf. iii. 7).

maketh . . . darkness: *sc.* with cloud or thunder, Ps. xviii.

treadeth upon the high places: as superior to them. If this is Amos's phrase it is finely echoed in the later literature; cf. Job ix. 8, xxii. 14; Ps. civ. 3; Mic. i. 3.

LORD, the God of hosts: iii. 13, v. 16, vi. 8, 14. The curious

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[1] This argument is very slight. The word occurs only here; but one hardly different (*sich*) occurs 1 Sam. i. 16; 1 Kings xviii. 27, which cannot be assumed to be late.

5 Hear ye this word which I take up for a lamentation
2 over you, O house of Israel. The virgin of Israel is
fallen; she shall no more rise: she is cast down upon
3 her land; there is none to raise her up. For thus saith
the Lord GOD: The city that went forth a thousand
shall have an hundred left, and that which went forth an
4 hundred shall have ten left, to the house of Israel. For
thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye
5 me, and ye shall live: but seek not Beth-el, nor enter
into Gilgal, and pass not to Beer-sheba: for Gilgal shall

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expression **Yahweh is his name** is paralleled in Second Isaiah (xlvii. 4, xlviii. 2, li. 15, liv. 5) and in Jeremiah (x. 16, xxxi. 35, xxxii. 18, xlvi. 18, xlviii. 15). Prof. G. A. Smith thinks that it suggests a later date, but it can hardly be used to show that the verse was not written by Amos: he may have first used the phrase, and the majesty of it led later prophets to repeat it.

v. 1–17. *Another denunciation, not unmixed with calls to repentance* (verse 14).

1, 2. A brief dirge, in a poetic form. It is like a passing-bell which should strike awe into the careless and hardened. For such a dirge cf. Jer. ix. 17; for taking it up, see Jer. vii. 29; Ezek. xix. 1, xxvi. 17, xxvii. 2.

The virgin of Israel: the country conceived as a young girl, whom Yahweh loved, as in Hosea; cf. Isa. xxxvii. 22, xlvii. 1; Jer. xiv. 17, xlvi. 11, &c.

cast down: dashed—the word in Hebrew has the sound of the crash, *nitshah*—on her own ground. This elegiac form is paralleled in Jer. ix. 10–11; Lam. i. 1.

none to raise her up: the Northern Kingdom never returned from captivity.

3. Evidently in this period the host went out, not as in old times by tribes and families, but by towns and villages. In this great defeat the army would not be decimated only, but nine-tenths would fall. Woe worth the day! Well may the prophet raise a dirge like David's over Saul on Gilboa.

4. Seek ye me, as in Ps. ix. 10; Isa. ix. 13; Jer. x. 21; Hos. x. 12; Zeph. i. 6. The cultus at the great shrines, Beth-el (iii. 4), Gilgal (iv. 5), Beer-sheba, is vain; for it is employed in place of seeking the living God. What a warning! Away with church-going, sacraments, formal prayers, and seek Me!

5. pass not to Beer-sheba: to reach this southern point of the

surely go into captivity, and Beth-el shall come to
nought. Seek the LORD, and ye shall live; lest he 6
break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour
and there be none to quench it in Beth-el: ye who turn 7
judgement to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to
the earth; *seek him* that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, 8
and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and

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land, fifty miles south-west of Jerusalem, it was necessary to pass over the whole territory of Judah (viii. 14: cf. 1 Sam. viii. 2).

Gilgal shall surely go into captivity. The Hebrew is a play on words, '*Ha-Gilgal galoh yiglah.*' Prof. G. A. Smith suggests: 'Gilgal shall taste the gall of exile.' Pusey ingeniously suggests the parallel to this play on words: 'London is undone.'

Beth-el shall . . .: *lit.* 'shall become Aven, iniquity.' So Hos. iv. 15, who actually calls it 'Beth-aven,' possibly borrowing from Amos (Hos. v. 8, x. 5, 8). Aven means both iniquity, such as idol-worship, and trouble. It is a play on the word.

6. break out. For the comparison of God's wrath with fire, see Deut. iv. 24, xxxii. 22; Isa. x. 17; Jer. iv. 4, xxi. 12.

Nowack points out the defects of grammar in the Hebrew. LXX has Beth-Israel, 'House of Israel,' for Beth-el.

house of Joseph: i. e. Ephraim and Manasseh.

7. This verse seems rather out of place; Prof. G. A. Smith would put it between verses 9 and 10. But wherever it comes, it shows that the grave charge against Israel, which rendered their worship nugatory, was the perversion of justice.

wormwood: cf. vi. 12; Jer. ix. 15, xxiii. 15; Lam. iii. 15, 19; Rev. viii. 11. Absinthe is derived from the Greek word for wormwood. What is so bitter as the award of a corrupt bench?

8, 9. It must be owned that this magnificent doxology is a break in the discourse, and, more than iv. 13, may be suspected as a later insertion.

Tzalmaveth ('shadow of death') is a late word, as Wellhausen says. But, as no one can say who wrote it or when it was written, we do well to take it as it comes, a grand, if disconnected, apostrophe, reminding us that the Lord who bids us seek Him is the Maker of heaven and earth.

Pleiades (*lit.* 'the group') **and Orion** (*lit.* 'the giant,' or rather, 'fool'). This was the Hebrew name for Orion, in later times Nimrod (Job ix. 9, xxxviii. 31).

shadow of death is merely a strong image for the deep darkness.

maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the
waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of
9 the earth; the LORD is his name; that bringeth sudden
destruction upon the strong, so that destruction cometh
10 upon the fortress. They hate him that reproveth in the
gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.
11 Forasmuch therefore as ye trample upon the poor, and
take exactions from him of wheat: ye have built houses
of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have
planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink the
12 wine thereof. For I know how manifold are your
transgressions and how mighty are your sins; ye that

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calleth: a fine figure, says Prof. Driver; cf. Job xxxviii. 34; Isa. xlviii. 13.

waters of the sea: ix. 6; cf. Job xii. 15: in great inundations, rather than in clouds and rain.

the LORD is his name: see on iv. 13, ix. 5, 6.

9. destruction: the same word *shôd* in the two clauses is strange. The LXX has *sheber*, 'ruin,' in the first, which is decidedly better. The margin is more exact in rendering 'causeth to flash forth,' cf. verse 6, breaking out as fire. (Cf. Isa. lix. 7, lx. 18.)

10. They hate. Who? The connexion is difficult. If verses 8, 9 are an interpolation, we are carried back to 'ye who turn judgement to wormwood,' verse 7, but the change from second to third person is awkward, especially as in verse 11 we return to the second person. But Hebrew allows a wide latitude in such variations.

the gate: the centre of concourse, of business, and of administration of justice, like the Forum in Rome (Deut. xxv. 7; Ruth iv. 1, 11. 1 Kings xxii. 10; 2 Kings vii. 1 for the gate of Samaria). Rebuking in the gate is illustrated by Jeremiah (xvii. 19, xix. 2) and Isaiah (xxix. 21). No doubt Amos had himself chosen that station for his prophesying.

11. Here the sin of the rich and their punishment are put together in a sentence. Wealth made by injustice is not only insecure but certain to fail. It is clear that the rich had ways then of taking the very bread out of the mouth of the poor, perhaps by high rents, perhaps by taxation, hardly by direct robbery.

houses of hewn stone: Isa. ix. 10, the newest luxury of the capital. For the threat see Mic. vi. 15; Zeph. i. 13.

afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate *from their right.* Therefore he that is 13 prudent shall keep silence in such a time; for it is an evil time. Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: 14 and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye say. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish 15 judgement in the gate: it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph. Therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of 16 hosts, the Lord: Wailing shall be in all the broad ways; and they shall say in all the streets, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing. And in all vine- 17

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12. a bribe (1 Sam. xii. 3): it is the same root in Hebrew as 'atonement,' Exod. xxi. 30; Num. xxxv. 31. What a train of thought that opens! Human injustice bribed by cupidity; Divine justice bribed by Divine love and sacrifice!

turn aside: Isa. xxix. 21; Mal. iii. 5.

13. silence: cf. Prov. ix. 7. Terrible is it when the folly and sin of the times silence the wise and the good. While Amos lived at least this silence would not fall.

14. Indeed he passes to a new appeal for repentance, as if he still hoped for his incorrigible people. These two verses are the most hopeful in the book. Prof. G. A. Smith thinks verses 14, 15 are clearly a parenthesis, inserted later, perhaps after Tiglath-Pileser had swept Galilee and Gilead into captivity, but had left Ephraim, 'the remnant of Joseph,' untouched (B. C. 734). This has the advantage of giving a meaning to the 'therefore' of verse 16, which follows on verse 13. But the clauses and paragraphs of our prophet lie often in so loose a connexion that we do well to leave them as they stand and trace a connexion where we can.

15. the remnant of Joseph: i. e. to which before long it will have been reduced, iii. 12.

16, 17. The section ends with a terrible denunciation of sorrow, prefaced by the arresting 'thus saith Yahweh, God of hosts, Lord,' an unusual order of the Divine titles.

Wailing. Still the Arab mourning consists of the women, led by professional wailers, bursting out into wild and maniacal shrieks.

skilful of lamentation: professional mourners, 2 Chron. xxxv. 25; Eccles. xii. 5; Jer. ix. 17.

yards shall be wailing: for I will pass through the midst
18 of thee, saith the LORD. Woe unto you that desire the
day of the LORD! wherefore would ye have the day of
19 the LORD? it is darkness, and not light. As if a man
did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into
the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent
20 bit him. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness,
and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?
21 I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight

The phrase, **I will pass through the midst,** and the universal wailing, remind one of the visitation of Egypt at the Exodus; but now it is not the Egyptians but the Israelites that are to suffer (Exod. xii. 12).

v. 18—vi. 14. *Captivity, woes, and foes.*

18. the day of the LORD (cf. Isa. ii. 12-21; Joel ii. 1; Zeph. i. 7, 14-16), the good time coming which men instinctively hoped for. Wellhausen aptly quotes Tolstoi: 'You know what kind of people we Russians are. We always hope that some time or other some one will come to heal all our wounds, and free us from all our troubles as from an aching tooth.' This easy idea, that when Yahweh intervenes it must be in their favour, Amos had to eradicate from his contemporaries. Wellhausen unnecessarily adds, 'He would have also protested against the Messias-idea if he had known it.' That is only so far true as that he might have protested against Messianic expectations void of ethical meaning. The day of Yahweh, says Amos, is a great reality, but it rests on moral grounds. For men of evil life, however seemingly religious, it brings darkness, not light.

19. He illustrates the amazed disappointment of this expectation by experiences in his herdman's life. The Syrian bear is fiercer than the lion (Dan. vii. 5: cf. 2 Kings ii. 24; Lam. iii. 10). But worse still to go weary and palpitating into your home, to lean against the wall, and then to be bitten by a deadly serpent—that is the terror. Such a terror is Yahweh's day to wicked men.

21. Amos turns again to denounce the unhallowed cultus. In his scorn, like Jeremiah or Isaiah, he almost implies that the whole practice of sacrifices and assemblies was without Divine sanction. But that is not his meaning; his point is only that, when men are sinful, their worship, however correct, is unacceptable to God.

feasts: *ḥaggim,* the three feasts at which every male had to appear, Exod. xxiii. 14, 17, xxxiv. 23; Deut. xvi. 16.

in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me 22
your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept
them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your
fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy 23
songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But 24
let judgement roll down as waters, and righteousness as
a mighty stream. Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and 25

will take no delight: so Isa. xi. 3, though the word means literally 'to smell,' and might express the pagan notion that the gods delighted in the reek of the sacrifices (cf. the spiritual illustration, Eph. v. 2), Lev. xxvi. 31; Isa. xi. 3.

assemblies: the spring and harvest feasts, Deut. xvi. 8; Lev. xxiii. 36; Num. xxix. 35; 2 Chron. vii. 9; Neh. viii. 18. But it covers all religious gatherings.

22. Isaiah closely follows this, Isa. i. 14. These are all the duly constituted rites of worship. But Yahweh will have none of them, while they are mingled with iniquity (Exod. xx. 24, xxxii. 6; Judges xx. 26, xxi. 4; 1 Sam. x. 8, xiii. 9, &c.).

the peace offerings: Exod. xvii. 12; Deut. xii. 6.

23. songs: Psalms used in the worship, viii. 10; Isa. xxx. 29.

viols[1]: also used in worship.

The idea in **Take thou away** is that of removing a troublesome burden, Isa. i. 14.

24. Here the whole soul of Amos speaks; cf. v. 7, 15, vi. 12. This is the great prophetic message; its N. T. parallel is James i. 27.

mighty stream: or rather, 'perennial.' The word *êthān* occurs in the name of the seventh month, Ethanim, the month of the perennial streams, and in Exod. xiv. 27; Ps. lxxiv. 15; Jer. v. 15. 'Stream' (Heb. *nahal*) is the Arab. *wady*.

25. The question implies that the Israelites did not offer sacrifices in the wilderness; and yet that was a time of Yahweh's close presence with the people: cf. ii. 9, 10. It was the golden

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[1] The viol, *nebhel*, differed from the *kinnor*, or harp, according to Josephus (*Antiq.* viii. 3. 8), in this way: the *kinnor* had ten strings and was played with a plectrum, the *nebhel* had twelve and was played with the hand. But as the word *nebhel* also means a wine-skin (1 Sam. i. 24) and an earthen jar (Isa. xxx. 14), it is possible that it was more of the nature of a lute. It was used for secular music (Amos vi. 5; Isa. v. 12, xiv. 11) and for religious purposes, as here, 2 Sam. vi. 5, the Psalms, and 1 Chron. xiii. 8, xv. 16, &c.

offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?
26 Yea, ye have borne Siccuth your king and Chiun your

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time of Yahweh's love to His beloved, as Hosea puts it, and yet the elaborate ritual of the later religion was unknown. (So Ewald, Wellhausen, Nowack.) Cf. Jer. vii. 22.

This obvious and simple interpretation of course implies that Amos did not know the view expressed in the completed Pentateuch, that the sacrificial, or Levitical, system had been appointed in the wilderness.

Naturally, before the modern view of the growth of the Mosaic institutions and the date of the Pentateuch was reached, interpreters tried, as in the A. V., to read the verse as if it implied that such offerings had been made for forty years.

offerings: i. e. meal offerings, as marg. and verse 22 (cf. Ps. xl. 6; Isa. xix. 21).

26. This verse is very obscure, text and rendering being quite uncertain. To strike out the verse with Wellhausen, or to leave out words with Prof. G. A. Smith, 'But ye shall lift up . . . your king and . . . your god, images which you have made for yourselves,' are desperate expedients. But we can extract no certainty from the words, even if, with Robertson Smith, we remove the words **the star of your god.**

If **Siccuth** and **Chiun** are names of idols, they must be *Sakkut*, the Assyrian god of war (*Adar*), and *Kêwān* (Saturn); so Schrader. Taking the verb as undoubtedly future, we should get a prophecy that the Israelites who offered the vain and empty ritual will presently take up the images of Assyrian gods, and so will go away into exile. Ewald and Robertson Smith, however, suggested that the names are not proper names, but common nouns in the construct case, 'the shrine of your king and the stand of your images,' but these meanings are unsupported. The LXX had a different text, and translated 'you took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Raiphan, their images which ye made for yourselves.' From the LXX Stephen quoted, Acts vii. 43. One thing is certain, that the verse cannot grammatically or historically refer to the desert-life of Israel; the verb is future, and Amos could not have attributed the worship of Assyrian gods to the time of Moses. The only hope of making sense is to accept Schrader's suggestion, and to illustrate the carrying of the helpless idols by Isa. xlvi. 1; Jer. xlviii. 7, xlix. 3. Wellhausen objects that captives would not take their conquerors' gods into captivity. But is not the irony of the situation, that Israel by its sins has implicitly made the Assyrian gods Siccuth and Chiun his own, and in the captivity will only make explicit what has been before implicit?

images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.
Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond 27
Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is the God of
hosts.

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and to them 6
that are secure in the mountain of Samaria, the notable
men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of
Israel come! Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from 2

Nowack regards the verse as inserted by a reader in the Assyrian period, who saw his compatriots brought into this degrading relation with Assyrian gods. The 'star of your god' should perhaps be 'your star-god,' in reference to Chiun, as the Assyrian Saturn.

27. beyond Damascus: that points to Assyria, the only power which deported their enemies, and whose direction was north-east. Stephen says Babylon, Acts vii. 43.

whose name. The phrase is rather strange; it connects itself with those in the disputed doxologies, iv. 13, v. 8, ix. 6.

Prof. Driver traces the growth of Amos's great teaching against the empty ceremonialism through all the prophets, Hos. vi. 6; Isa. i. 10–17; Mic. vi. 6–8; Jer. vi. 19, 20, vii. 1–15, 21–23; Isa. lxvi. 2–4; 1 Sam. xv. 22; Ps. xl. 6–8, l. 13–15, li. 16, 17; Prov. xv. 8, xxi. 27; Ecclus. xxxiv. 18, xxxv. 11, a most instructive series of quotations.

vi. *The woes turn from the godless worshippers to the godless rich.*

1. at ease in Zion: Isa. xxxii. 9; first the ruling classes in Jerusalem are denounced, then the same class in Samaria, the Northern capital.

notable men of the chief: cf. Num. i. 17, those 'expressed by name,' the chiefs and princes, as we should say 'the titled.' Pusey thinks that the phrase is archaic and recalls the early glories of Israel, as, were we to call the peers 'the barons of England,' we should recall the days of Magna Charta. The word 'chief' addressed to them is sarcastic, as in the Revolution to name men aristocrats, which means best, implied the worst.

Prof. G. A. Smith takes **chief of the nations** to mean the foremost nation, as Israel considered itself. But that is rendered difficult by the clause **to whom the house of Israel come.** It is far simpler to take the phrase as equal to 'the upper classes,' who, as always, set the fashion and formed the aspirations of the people as a whole.

2. This verse is rendered insipid by Pusey, and ejected by thence go ye to Hamath the great: then go down to Gath of the Philistines: be they better than these

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Prof. G. A. Smith. As Wellhausen says, it only acquires meaning if we regard the three kingdoms mentioned as examples of great states which have been violent and wicked, and have been overtaken by 'the evil day.'

Then **be they,** &c., means, 'Are these luxurious Israelites better than those humiliated peoples?' We must, to make it clear, apply to the plural adjective 'better' the Heb. *attem*, 'you,' and the comparative *min* must be placed before **their border,** viz., 'is your border greater than their border[1]?'

But when by this slight alteration we gain a clear sense, we have the difficulty that, so far as we know, two of the three states were not conquered before the time of Amos (Isa. x. 9, xxxvii. 13). Hamath fell under the assault of Sargon in 720, and if Calneh (Gen. x. 10) is identical with the Kulaim of the inscriptions, it fell under the assault of Sargon in 711. Gath, on the other hand, was taken by Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 6); and as it was omitted by Amos among the Philistine cities (i. 7, 8), we may assume that it had not recovered its position when Amos wrote.

But we can hardly escape the conclusion to which Wellhausen comes, that the verse was inserted at the end of the eighth century, after the fall of Calneh and Hamath. To leave out the verse creates no gap.

Calneh. It may be the city on the Euphrates of Gen. x. 10. But it would be much more intelligible here if we might identify it with Kullanhon, six miles from Tel Arfad, a little north of Aleppo: in Isa. x. 9 Arpad and Calneh are mentioned together. Or, with Dillmann, we may find it in Kunnhea, south-east of Antioch, seventy-five miles north of Hamath (see Driver).

Hamath: 150 miles north of Dan, on the Orontes, an independent kingdom (2 Sam. viii. 9). The entering to Hamath, the pass between the Lebanons, was the northern boundary of Israel (e. g. 2 Kings xiv. 25). It is often mentioned in the Assyrian Inscriptions; in 740 Tiglath-Pileser III, and in 720 Sargon overpowered it.

Gath. Sargon took it in 711, if Gimtu Asdudim may be identified with it. Prof. G. A. Smith seeks the site on a height eleven miles south of Ekron, not far from Ashdod.

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[1] Prof. Driver follows Ewald, Hitzig, Keil, W. R. Smith, in the ordinary view that these three cities are quoted as examples of peculiarly flourishing states, with which Israel complacently compared themselves. But he does not see why they are selected as illustrations of prosperity above all others. And the verse remains on this supposition hopelessly insipid.

kingdoms? or is their border greater than your border?
Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of 3
violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and 4
stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs
out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the
stall; that sing idle songs to the sound of the viol; that 5
devise for themselves instruments of music, like David;
that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the 6
chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction

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3. Isa. v follows this very closely. They would not listen to the notion of an impending visitation; violence was enthroned on their tribunals, Isa. v. 18.

vi. 4–6. *A picture of luxurious life which was revolting to the Puritan austerity of the herdman prophet.*

4. beds: i.e. divans, iii. 12.

stretch themselves: sprawl out, so verse 7. Looseness of gesture goes with looseness of morals. To lie at table was a new luxurious custom recently introduced. Formerly they sat at table, Gen. xxvii. 19; Judges xix. 6; 1 Sam. xx. 5, 24.

midst of the stall: the general fold contains a railed-off portion for calves or lambs frequently in Palestine to this day. To eat lambs and stalled calves is itself a luxury.

sing idle songs: one word, a participle, in Hebrew; the word (*pārat*) occurs only here. Pusey gives the meaning as 'making a hurried flow of unmeaning words to the sound of the viol.' They sang songs, not without words but without sense.

like David. Wellhausen sees in this a weighty evidence that David was famous in the time of Amos not so much for religious Psalms as for secular music. But this is to build too much on a narrow foundation. It is quite possible that the comparison 'like David' is a bold satirical slash. Like David, the great musician who introduced instruments of music into the Divine worship (1 Chron. xv. 16, 19–21, 24; 2 Chron. xxix. 25, 26), they also invent instruments, but for frivolous songs and to accompany their drinking-bouts!

bowls: ewers, used for water, to dash over the altar (Exod. xxvii. 3; 1 Kings vii. 40; 2 Kings xii. 3).

chief ointments: like 1 Kings x. 10; Ezek. xxvii. 22; Mark xiv. 3, 5.

the affliction of Joseph: this must mean the affliction which was looming upon the horizon, the evil day, which these revellers put far away. At present Joseph (i. e. Ephraim and Manasseh)

7 of Joseph. Therefore now shall they go captive with the
first that go captive, and the revelry of them that
8 stretched themselves shall pass away. The Lord GOD
hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD, the God of hosts:
I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces:
therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.
9 And it shall come to pass, if there remain ten men in
10 one house, that they shall die. And when a man's

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seemed in the height of prosperity. It is the great evil of luxury that it blinds the eyes to its inevitable moral consequences. We need not suppose that the prophecy was written after 734, when Tiglath-Pileser had taken Gilead and Galilee captive: the affliction of Joseph was yet in the future.

affliction: rather, 'breach' or 'wound,' as Isa. xxx. 26; Jer. vi. 14.

7. now: the turning-point of the prophetic utterance; cf. Hos. ii. 12, v. 7.

with the first: they shall retain their pre-eminence as to first—to suffer.

that stretched themselves: here the moral meaning predominates, and the word is equivalent to 'dissolute.'

8. sworn by himself: iv. 2.

The Lord GOD hath sworn . . saith the LORD is a strange expression.

excellency: rather, 'pride'; cf. verse 13: viz. either the vain-glorious temper, Hos. v. 5, vii. 10, or the things they are proud of, Nahum ii. 3; Zech. ix. 6.

deliver up: Deut. xxxii. 30.

the city: Samaria.

vi. 9, 10. *A vivid picture of a population which is destroyed by the famine or the pestilence of the long three years' siege of Samaria.* It is a difficulty that ten men left in a house is a large number even for a palace, iii. 15. Perhaps we may construe, with Prof. G. A. Smith, 'if there be left ten men in one house, and they die,' and suppose that the apodosis is lost, or perhaps merged in verse 10.

But **10** is very difficult to construe. We have three words beginning the verse, 'And there shall take him up his uncle, and his burner'; but to whom 'his' refers is not stated. The difficulties of exposition are, says Wellhausen, insuperable. And it is plain that verses 9, 10 are an interpolation between 8 and 11. But notwithstanding grammatical difficulties a grim meaning

uncle shall take him up, even he that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that is in the innermost parts of the house, Is there yet any with thee? and he shall say, No; then shall he say, Hold thy peace; for we may not make mention of the name of the LORD. For, behold, the LORD 11
commandeth, and the great house shall be smitten with breaches, and the little house with clefts. Shall horses 12
run upon the rock? will one plow *there* with oxen? that ye have turned judgement into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood: ye which rejoice in a 13
thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us

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glimmers through the words. There are ten men in the house; they are all supposed to be dead. An uncle, because no nearer relation survives, comes to bury one of them, or rather, in the stress of famine and plague, to burn the bones, contrary to Hebrew custom —the burning of Saul and his sons is the only example in the O. T.—except the burning of criminals, Gen. xxxviii. 24; Lev. xx. 14, xxi. 9; Joshua vii. 15, 25. Prof. Driver thinks the **burner** may be only the one who burnt spices in honour of the dead, 2 Chron. xvi. 14, xxi. 19; Jer. xxxiv. 5. The question is put, 'Is there another survivor?' And a sepulchral voice answers, 'No!' feeling that it too will soon be silent. And in awe the other says, 'Hush!' The Holy Name may not be mentioned in a calamity so appalling, lest it bring down an avalanche of further vengeance (so Prof. G. A. Smith).

11. The Targum says the great house is Israel, and the little one Judah. But this is arbitrary; the reference is to the palace and the cottage.

12 gives the ground of this judgement, the perversion of justice. Such wickedness is as sure to provoke disaster, or at least to end in disappointment, as to set horses climbing pinnacles of rock, or oxen to plough in the same material.

Michaelis greatly improved the second clause of the comparison by reading *babbeḳarim* (the plural for ox does not occur) as *babbakar yam*, 'Shall one plough the sea with an ox?'—an almost certain correction.

gall: rather 'poison,' the same word as Hos. x. 4, 'hemlock.' For **wormwood**, cf. v. 7.

13. The words sound less strange in English than in Hebrew: they mean that iniquity and its gains are, as it were, a nothing, 14 horns by our own strength? For, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the LORD, the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hamath unto the brook of the Arabah.

7 Thus the Lord GOD shewed me: and, behold, he

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and the boast 'we have taken horns' (Deut. xxxiii. 17) is simply the boast of power. But Grätz first pointed out that the two Hebrew words, *Lodebar* and *Karnaim*, might be two places, which these wealthy Israelites boasted of having taken. The one is found in Joshua xiii. 26; 2 Sam. ix. 4, 5, xvii. 27; the other in Gen. xiv. 5 and 1 Macc. v. 42 (LXX). Both towns were in Gilead, the battle-ground between Israel and Syria. They had both perhaps recently been taken by Israel in Jeroboam II's victorious wars; but not by his own strength, rather by the fact that Syria was threatened by Assyria. Prof. G. A. Smith thinks the two towns, out of perhaps many, were named because of their meaning and the play upon the words.

14. In contrast with these petty conquests, a great enemy is soon to come, viz. Assyria, from beyond the northern boundary, Hamath (which Jeroboam II had recovered to Israel, 2 Kings xiv. 25, 28). In that passage of the history the phrase is used 'from the entering in of Hamath (i. e. where the defile ran up to Hamath) unto the sea of the Arabah' (i. e. the Dead Sea). The **brook** of the Arabah is more difficult to determine; it must be some wady from the east entering the plain of the Jordan at the southern boundary of the kingdom of Israel. Nowack identifies it with the wady el-Ahsa (Hesi, on Bartholomew's and G. A. Smith's wonderful map of Palestine), between Moab and Edom at the southern end of the Dead Sea (Isa. xv. 7), an ideal rather than the practical limit of Israel.

Thus ends the great series of threatenings, ruin, affliction, and exile!

SECTION III.

vii–ix. *A series of visions, interspersed with a narrative and addresses.*

Vision is the beginning of prophecy (Hos. xii. 10), and the four visions given here explain perhaps how Amos the herdman became a prophet. The form of prophetic revelation, says Ewald, belongs to psychology. We are to think of actual visions, not of prophetic thoughts clothed in that form. They are chronologically recorded, as the remarkable interposition of the biographical narrative between the third and the fourth, vii. 10–17, seems to show.

formed locusts in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings. And it came to pass that when 2
they made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee: how shall Jacob stand? for he is small. The LORD repented 3
concerning this: It shall not be, saith the LORD.

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vii. 1–3. *How a plague of locusts seen in vision was averted one spring by the prayer of Amos.*

1. shewed me (verses 4, 7, viii. 1): made me see, sent me the vision of.

formed locusts. The Hebrew word for locust here (*gōbay*) may mean the locust in the larva stage when it is just hatched.

the latter growth: i. e. the quick development of the crops after the rains in March and April, in contrast with the verdure after the October rains.

the king's mowings. Prof. Driver thinks the king's mowings were a tribute levied on the spring herbage for the use of his cavalry, and says that the Roman governors of Syria did the same: cf. 1 Kings iv. 7, xviii. 5. Wellhausen quotes Ps. lxxii. 6. When that was over every one might proceed to his mowing. Thus the locusts were coming just at the critical point of the year.

2. He prayed that the further calamity might be avoided; he saw in the eating of the grass, as it were, the beginning of the end. The nation was small, in spite of its pride and wealth. It might easily be ruined.

3. repented: Exod. xxxii. 12; Deut. xxxii. 36; Jer. xviii. 8; Joel ii. 13; Jonah iii. 10. This beautiful instance of intercessory prayer answered is, notwithstanding the simplicity of the statement, one of the most wonderful in Scripture.

Pusey thinks that the locust-vision symbolizes the first contact with Assyria. When invited by Menahem to establish him on the throne, Pul (Tiglath-Pileser) exacted a heavy fine (2 Kings xv. 19). In this case the second vision symbolizes the captivity of East and North Israel when Ahaz invoked Tiglath-Pileser against Pekah (2 Kings xv. 29), and the third vision refers to Shalmaneser's invasion and the final destruction of Israel (B.C. 721, 2 Kings xvii. 3). Prof. G. A. Smith, on the other hand, thinks that Assyria does not come into view until the third vision, and that the two first refer only to physical calamities, locust-swarm and drought, the penalties referred to in chapter iv. Pusey's view is far too intricate, and involves the curious position that the prayers

4 Thus the Lord God shewed me: and, behold, the Lord God called to contend by fire; and it devoured the great deep, and would have eaten up the land.
5 Then said I, O Lord God, cease, I beseech thee: how
6 shall Jacob stand? for he is small. The Lord repented concerning this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord God.

7 Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood beside a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in
8 his hand. And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what

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of Amos, on the strength of a vision, averted the calamities of Assyrian interference and invasion forty or fifty years later! That is no shock to Pusey's heroic faith; but the later view is simpler, and more religiously edifying.

vii. 4. *The second Vision.*

4. called to contend by fire: or, as Prof. Davidson rendered, 'was calling fire into the quarrel,' i. e. the quarrel with his sinful people. The fire is the blazing heat of the sun which causes a drought, or the conflagrations in a field after drought (Ps. lxxxiii. 14; Isa. ix. 18; Joel i. 19, 20).

great deep: i. e. the vast gathering of waters on which the earth as a disk was supposed to float, the source from which sprang the rivers and fountains (Gen. i. 7; Exod. xx. 4). If this great deep was burnt up, the unwatered land would soon follow.

land: *lit.* 'portion,' a term used for the land which Yahweh had given to Israel, Mic. ii. 4 (cf. 2 Kings ix. 10, 36).

5. This repetition from verses 2, 3 reminds us of the repeated prayer in Gethsemane. Our prayers are numberless, but they are all nearly the same. The newness of prayer consists not in fresh phrases but in fresh circumstances.

vii. 7. *The third Vision.*

7. the Lord stood: rather, 'took His stand' judicially.

a wall made by a plumbline: i. e. formerly built to the line, but now bowing and cracking, and showing the impending doom by its deviation from the perpendicular. This explains why in 2 Kings xxi. 13; Isa. xxxiv. 11 the use of the plumbline is the symbol of destruction. It is the warning finger which shows that the wall is no longer safe, and will fall or must be taken down.

8. Amos: a beautiful personal touch showing the relation

seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel; I will not again pass by them any more:
and the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the 9
sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.
Then Amaziah the priest of Beth-el sent to Jeroboam 10
king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee

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between the Lord and His prophet, cf. Exod. xxxiii. 12, 17; 2 Tim. ii. 19.

9. Isaac: Amos alone uses this Patriarch's name to describe Israel (verse 16). Fanciful reasons are offered, but perhaps the **high places of Isaac** refer to Beer-sheba (Gen. xxvi. 24). 'High places = sanctuaries.' Prof. Driver's note on the high places is a masterpiece of condensation. The high place outside the town was an institution borrowed from the Canaanite (Deut. xii. 2). It was considered quite correct in Samuel's time (1 Kings iii. 4, xviii. 30). After the Deuteronomic law, B.C. 610, historians read back into the past a condemnation of these local sanctuaries, which had now become illegal. There is no condemnation of the high places as such; that only began after the Deuteronomist, in the seventh century B.C. The holy places of convocation and worship are to perish.

the house of Jeroboam: cf. Hos. i. 4.

the sword: an invading army.

In this third judgement doom was irrevocable, and the prophet did not pray for deliverance.

10. This threat, uttered against the sanctuaries, and against the royal house, provoked the interference of the official guardian of the royal sanctuary of Beth-el. The sanctuaries were, according to the faith of the time, the dwelling-place of Yahweh; to predict their destruction was to threaten Him! The priest Amaziah therefore treats the prophet as one who has uttered treason against the country, and against Yahweh, the God of the land, and tries to incense Jeroboam by exaggerating what Amos had said against the king. The priest usually assails the prophet, but bases his charge, not on his own grudge, but on an alleged political offence: 'he speaketh against Caesar' John xix. 12 (cf. Jer. xxxvii. 13, xxxviii. 4, where the politicians, and not the priests, would suppress the prophet).

hath conspired: i. e. 'banded against' (1 Sam. xxii. 8, 13; 1 Kings xv. 27, xvi. 9, 16; 2 Kings x. 9, xiv. 19, xv. 10, 15, 25, xxi. 23). But there is no sign that Amos had formed a party.

in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able
11 to bear all his words. For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam
shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led
12 away captive out of his land. Also Amaziah said unto
Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of
13 Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but
prophesy not again any more at Beth-el: for it is the
14 king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house. Then answered
Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither

He stood in perilous solitude. His only fellow conspirator was God.

the land is not able to bear: *lit.* 'contain.' Thus the interested opponent of reform always pleads his country's good.

11. Jeroboam shall die by the sword: this Amos had not said; it was not Jeroboam, but the house of Jeroboam, that was thus to be cut off; which came to pass. Amaziah omits all that Amos had said of the iniquities, of repentance, of the meaning of punishment. This *suppressio veri* is a *suggestio falsi*. Amos was not attacking the king or the land, but urging repentance, under the threat of punishment. Strange to say, Jeroboam took no notice of the priest's charge.

12. O thou seer (*hozeh*, the word used 2 Sam. xxiv. 11; 2 Chron. xxix. 25; Isa. xxix. 10; Mic. iii. 7: *rōʾeh* is used in 1 Sam. ix. 9, 11, 18, 19). Amaziah recognizes that Amos is a prophet, and rejects him as such, just as the Jews recognized and rejected Christ on the cross. But he had the contemptuous view of the prophet, which was partially justified by the corruption of the prophetic schools (Mic. iii. 5), and which is the eternal pretext why men will not listen to the prophet, but will slay him and build his tomb.

land of Judah: to which Amos belonged, and where predictions of Israel's fall might be not unacceptable, but also the proper home of prophecy.

there eat bread: implying that he prophesied from mercenary motives (cf. 1 Sam. ix. 7, 8; Isa. xxx. 10; Ezek. xiii. 19; Mic. iii. 5).

13. the king's sanctuary: that is the perversion of a State religion. The sanctuary is God's, Exod. xxv. 8; Lev. xix. 30, xxvi. 2. In the king's sanctuary the voice of the true prophet is too often silenced. Hardly can a prophet be a courtier.

14. Amos's reply defends him from the charge of being a professional prophet, one of 'the sons of the prophets' (1 Kings xx. 35; 2 Kings ii. 3, iv. 1, v. 22, &c.). He was the founder, and purest type, of a new order of prophecy (Wellhausen).

was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a
dresser of sycomore trees: and the LORD took me from 15
following the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go,
prophesy unto my people Israel. Now therefore hear 16
thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophesy not
against Israel, and drop not *thy word* against the house
of Isaac; therefore thus saith the LORD: Thy wife shall 17
be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters
shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by

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prophet's son: thus in Syriac *bar naggārê*, 'son of the carpenters,' means a member of a carpenters' guild.

Bôker, a herdman, is a misreading for *nôḳed*; cf. i. 1. It was not cattle, but sheep and goats, that he tended.

sycomore trees: 1 Kings x. 27; Isa. ix. 10; Luke xix. 4. He grew and gathered the figs of the sycomore (rather, the fig-mulberry), and dressed them by pinching to promote their growth (Theophr. *Hist. Plant.* iv. 2; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xiii. 14). The tree attains the size of a walnut-tree; the fruit, the size of small figs, insipid and woody, grows out of the stem in clusters. An insect has to be removed from the top before it is eatable; this may be the dressing which gave Amos his occupation. The tree did not grow on the heights of Tekoa, but nearer the Dead Sea, at a level of 1,000 feet. They were the herdman's food.

15. flock: *sc.* the sheep of the special breed, Arab. *naḳaa* (cf. 2 Sam. vii. 8; Ps. lxxviii. 71).

16. Amaziah had said 'Do not prophesy.' Amos replies by prophesying specifically about him, and giving to the general threat of conquest and exile a terrible personal application.

drop not: Ezek. xx. 46, xxi. 2; Mic. ii. 6, 11. A synonym for 'prophesy.' The contrast is between 'Thou sayest' and 'Thus saith the Lord.'

17. an harlot: this happened generally in the capture of a city in ancient warfare (Isa. xiii. 16; Zech. xiv. 2).

in the city: where she had been the chief lady (Wellhausen). On the other hand, even the Assyrians did not usually butcher the women; it was an aggravation of this unfortunate priest's doom that his daughters would fall with their brothers. His property would be put up to auction in lots. And he would die in the unclean land, where, according to his belief, his God would not be, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19; Hos. ix. 3, 4.

divided by line: 2 Kings xvii. 24; Jer. vi. 12; Mic. ii. 4.

line; and thou thyself shalt die in a land that is unclean,
and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his
land.

8 Thus the Lord God shewed me: and behold, a basket
2 of summer fruit. And he said, Amos, what seest thou?
And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the
Lord unto me, The end is come upon my people Israel;
3 I will not again pass by them any more. And the songs
of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the
Lord God: the dead bodies shall be many; in every
4 place shall they cast them forth with silence. Hear this,

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led away captive. The opposition of the priest leads to this clear and unveiled forecast of exile.

viii. 1–3. To all appearance this fourth Vision followed immediately on Amaziah's interruption. Amos waited to deliver this final word before quitting Beth-el.

1. summer fruit: Heb. *ḳaitz* (2 Sam. xvi. 2; Jer. xl. 10), while the Hebrew for 'end' is *ḳetz*. Prof. Driver aptly illustrates this prophecy turning on a play upon words by Jer. i. 11, 12, where the thought of watching (*shōḳēd*) produces by association the image of the almond-tree (*shaḳed*). But it is not only a play on the words *ḳaitz* and *ḳetz*; it also expresses the fact 'the harvest is the end of the world' (Matt. xiii. 39). Jer. xxiv uses a similar image.

2. I will not again pass by them: cf. vii. 8. It is very terrible when we wish God to pass by us, for it reveals the awful discord between us. Things are not right until our one prayer is, 'Lord, abide with us.'

3. The awful vision of the final fall; the temple songs (cf. v. 23, ix. 1) turned into lamentation, the dead bodies in the street. 'In every place, He hath cast out; hush!' so we should render these, probably the last spoken, words of the first prophet who wrote.

viii. 4–14. From here to the end are a number of different oracles, which are loosely connected with one another, 'probably containing,' says Prof. G. A. Smith, 'some verses which are not from Amos himself.' The doubt is suggested by the unexpected change from the hopeless 'end' of viii. 3 into the joyous prospect of ix. 11. This has given rise to the suggestion that a later hand tried to relieve the gloom of the book by a more hopeful vision.

O ye that would swallow up the needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon 5 be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat? making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of

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But in the absence of any other proof that the words are not from Amos, we may cling to the belief that the Lord who sent the visions to the herdman gave him the two aspects of the Divine revelation lying side by side, the sufferings which were inevitable, and the glory which should follow.

viii. 4-6. This is an echo of ii. 6-8, but it is no weak echo, rather a vigorous reassertion of the former judgement.

4. this: viz. what follows in verse 7.

swallow up. Wellhausen would here, as in ii. 7, read *hashshaôphim*, 'who tread down'; cf. Ps. lvi. 1, 2, lvii. 3.

cause . . . to fail. The verb is in the infinitive, and has therefore no construction. Prof. Driver, however, justifies the infinitive as an idiom, meaning 'who are for making the poor of the land to cease' (*Hebrew Tenses*, § 206). And so Davidson, *Hebrew Syntax*, § 96. Also, says Wellhausen, it cannot mean 'to get rid of.' The conjecture therefore in our version must be regarded only as a conjecture. The LXX has a word which they could render by 'and oppressing' (cf. iv. 1).

5. The eagerness to be at business all through the holy day (cf. Num. xxviii. 11; 2 Kings iv. 23; Hos. ii. 11) and sabbath is closely connected with fraudulent dealings. If we violate the day of rest by thoughts of gain, we shall probably not hesitate to pursue our gain by dishonest methods, short measures, falsified weights, when we are estimating payment, and balances of deceit.

making the ephah small . . . pair of shoes is practically a parenthesis, a hurried description of their dishonest dealings, put shamelessly in their own mouths.

ephah small, &c. The ephah was about eight gallons. They gave short measure in selling the necessaries of life, while weighing the price to be paid against a weight that was unduly heavy. Strange to say, Dr. Chaplin found in 1890 on the site of Samaria one of these 'weighted shekels.' It is in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. It represents a shekel of 156 grains instead of 135 (*Pal. Explor. Fund Quarterly Statement*, 1894, p. 229). Cf. Lev. xix. 35; Deut. xxv. 13-16; Prov. xi. 1, xvi. 11, xx. 10; Hos. xii. 7; Mic. vi. 10. It was part of the law of holiness, Lev. xix. 35, to secure just weights, and Ezekiel saw this as one of the points in his ideal reconstruction of the State, Ezek. xlv. 9-12.

6 deceit; that we may buy the poor for silver, and the
needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the wheat.
7 The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely
8 I will never forget any of their works. Shall not the
land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth
therein? yea, it shall rise up wholly like the River; and
it shall be troubled and sink again, like the River of
9 Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the

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6. poor for silver, &c.: see ii. 6, but the words do not come in appropriately here, for this buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes is not connected with the selling of corn, which is the subject of the preceding words. In ii. 6 the wealthy 'sold the righteous for silver and shoes'; here the traders 'buy' them for the same price. We must suppose that the great lords sold up the poor to the dealers for trifling sums; and then possibly the dealers sold their purchases as slaves beyond the borders of Israel. But it seems as if Amos is breathlessly piling together the outrages of the wealthy owners and merchants without seeking to establish a connexion between the clauses. We cannot join Wellhausen in thinking the verse suspicious.

the refuse of the wheat: this completes the sentence, 'set forth wheat,' of verse 5 after the parenthesis. The 'refuse' means that for the high prices they propose to give poor stuff. And this is their thought on the holy day and the sabbath!

7. Now follows the sentence of Yahweh which was referred to as 'this' in verse 4.

the excellency of Jacob (iv. 2, vi. 8; Hos. v. 5, vii. 10) must mean the pride of Jacob, which is unfortunately so unchanging that it is the suitable reinforcement of an oath. God is indignant at the treatment of the poor, and at the pride which leads to it. And by that pride He swears to send the punishment.

8. The earthquake had already been sent as a tentative punishment (iv. 11). The comparison of the earthquake to the rising of the Nile which takes a whole month, and to the sinking of the waters which takes another month, is considered by some commentators as unsuitable. But the threat is apocalyptic, cf. Isa. xxiv. 19, 20. And there is an awful suggestion in the thought of an earthquake, which is not a momentary shudder, but the long steady rise and fall of the land, which has become unstable and fluid. After all, the earthquake is not literal; it is the symbol of the complete ruin of the land (cf. ix. 5).

9. Cf. Isa. xiii. 10; Joel ii. 2, iii. 15. According to Oppolzer's

Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day. And I will 10 turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning for an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord 11 God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, 12 and from the north even to the east; they shall run to

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chart, there was a complete eclipse of the sun in Amos's lifetime, June 15, 763 B. C. It would be observable at Jerusalem. It is referred to in the Assyrian annals (Geo. Smith, *Eponym. Canon*, pp. 46, 47). Of course the eclipse, like the earthquake, is only an image.

10. The signs of mourning here referred to were forbidden in the Deuteronomic legislation (Deut. xiv. 1), which presumably Amos did not know. It was a great severity of mourning not only to change the garment but to shear off the hair of women and the beard of men.

mourning for an only son recalls the mourning in Egypt when Israel's glorious day began. We may think also of the mourning for Tammuz, Ezek. viii. 14. In Tobit ii. 6 this prophecy of Amos is recognized as fulfilled in an event of the day, as so often it has been before and since.

11, 12. The most terrible threat of all. To earthquake and eclipse is added famine—famine for the word of the Lord, when the prophets now silenced would be welcomed, the gospel now rejected would be desired, as the thirsty desire water (cf. 1 Sam. xxviii. 6; Mic. iii. 6).

wander: i. e. go tottering, iv. 8; cf. Lam. iv. 15.

north . . . to the east: i. e. from the region of dark to the region of sunrise (cf. description of the land in Num. xxxiv. 3-12). Nowack, following Wellhausen, strikes out the verses as a later addition, because he says verse 13 refers to a literal and not a metaphorical thirst. But why must it be regarded as literal? Nothing can be more natural than this, that in the famine for the word of God the young suffer most. Older people may survive on traditions of the past, but the young hunger and thirst for the clear unmistakable utterance of God.

and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find
13 it. In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men
14 faint for thirst. They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, As thy God, O Dan, liveth; and, As the way of Beer-sheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.

9 I saw the Lord standing beside the altar: and he said, Smite the chapiters, that the thresholds may shake:

For **seek the word** cf. 1 Kings xxii. 5; 2 Kings iii. 11; Jer. xxxvii. 17.

13. There is no need therefore to strike out verses 11, 12 and connect verse 13 with 10, as even Prof. G. A. Smith proposes.

14. the sin of Samaria (cf. Deut. ix. 21): the golden calf, probably at Beth-el, to which Jeroboam seduced the people (cf. Hos. viii. 5, 6, x. 5). But Wellhausen thinks this could not have been an expression of Amos, who does not elsewhere attack any form of cultus, but only the moral evil connected with it all. Nor does Amos elsewhere use Samaria for Israel.

For 'swearing' as an expression of worship, see Deut. vi. 13, x. 20; Isa. xlviii. 1; Jer. xii. 16.

thy God, O Dan does not refer to another God than Yahweh; it is only like 'Our Lady of Loretto' as distinct from 'Our Lady of Lourdes'—the calf was set up by Jeroboam, 1 Kings xii. 29.

As the way of Beer-sheba liveth: i. e. not the manner of the Beer-sheba shrine, but the road to it. This very startling expression, Prof. G. A. Smith says, is illustrated by Arab usage to this day. Arabs will swear 'by the life of this fire or of this coffee.' And Moslems affirm their oaths by the sacred way to Mecca. So changeless is the East.

ix. 1-6. *A vision of Nemesis.* All the sternness and rigour of Amos are in this vision. It is unrelieved by a touch of mercy or relenting. It is well to compare this vision of the Lord upon the altar with the vision which Isaiah had of Him in the temple, Isa. vi. Here the whole people are conceived as being in the house of God, and buried beneath its ruins, like the Philistines in the temple of Dagon.

1. standing: rather, 'stationed.'

beside is 'leaning over'; cf. vii. 7; Num. xxiii. 3, 6; 1 Kings xiii. 1.

the altar: *sc.* at Beth-el, just where Jeroboam stood in 1 Kings xiii. 1.

Smite: the command is to the prophet.

chapiters (Zeph. ii. 14): it is singular. The capital of the

and break them in pieces on the head of all of them;
and I will slay the last of them with the sword: there
shall not one of them flee away, and there shall not one
of them escape. Though they dig into hell, thence shall 2
mine hand take them; and though they climb up to
heaven, thence will I bring them down. And though 3
they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search
and take them out thence; and though they be hid from
my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command
the serpent, and he shall bite them. And though they 4
go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I
command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will
set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good.

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pillar is to be smitten with such force that it trembles in its socket. The pillars supported the roof of the house.

break them: *sc.* the pillars and all that they support.

there shall not one of them, &c. The marginal reading is more literal: 'he that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered.'

2. hell . . . heaven: the two opposite poles of space, Job xi. 8, xxvi. 5; Ezek. xxxii. 18: cf. Ps. cxxxix. 7, of which Psalm this passage is, says Prof. G. A. Smith, a ruder draft.

bring them down. This expression is the hook by which Obadiah (verse 4) is attached to Amos in the Canon.

3. Carmel, springing as it were out of the sea, is the appropriate antithesis to the depths of the sea. The top of Carmel was an *ἄβατον*, i. e. an asylum where cattle were protected by religious sanctions (Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, i. 146). It is also honeycombed with caves in which, said Schultz, an army could hide.

the serpent: i. e. leviathan or tannin, Isa. xxvii. 1. The hydrophidae are venomous sea-serpents found in the Indian and Pacific oceans, which the fishermen dread to see caught in their nets; cf. the legend of Perseus and the sea-monster on that coast.

4. captivity: to an Israelite, with his thought of a local god, as bad as Sheol. Yahweh will use the Assyrians, as He will use leviathan, in the punishment of His sinful people. There is no escape from God on earth or above or beneath it. Terrible is it when He watches us for evil and not for good (Ps. xxi. 10, xxxiv. 16; Jer. xxi. 10).

5 For the Lord, the God of hosts, *is* he that toucheth the land and it melteth, and all that dwell therein shall mourn; and it shall rise up wholly like the River; and
6 shall sink again, like the River of Egypt; *it is* he that buildeth his chambers in the heaven, and hath founded his vault upon the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea and poureth them out upon the face of the
7 earth; the Lord is his name. Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith

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5, 6. These verses, like iv. 13, v. 8, 9, are treated by commentators as a later interpolation. But in this case the repetition of the phrase used in viii. 8 may give a special reason for assigning them to Amos. It need not be argued how appropriate is this designation of the Omnipotent and Omniscient One, in closing the description of His searching and inexorable judgement. There is no real difficulty in the description being in the third and not in the first person, as verses 1-4. It is admittedly the prophet's comment, the delineation of Him whom he saw standing beside the altar.

the Lord, the GOD of hosts, should be 'Yahweh of hosts,' v. 14-16, vi. 8, iii. 13, vi. 14. The phrases 'Yahweh is his name' and 'Yahweh of Hosts' belong rather to the later prophets.

toucheth the land: it is the picture of a storm, Judges v. 4; Ps. xlvi. 6, lxxv. 3, civ. 32; Mic. i. 4.

the River: see viii. 8.

6. vault, *aguddah*, is equivalent to the more familiar *rakia*, the firmament, Job xxvi. 11, the vast hemispherical vault which to an eye innocent of the truths of astronomy seems to rest as a huge cupola upon the earth (Driver).

calleth for the waters: see v. 8.

ix. 7-10. *The awful severity of the judgement relents a little.*

7. children of the Ethiopians: the descendants of Ham, the despised and accursed branch of Noah's family, cf. Jer. xiii. 23; they inhabited what is the modern Soudan (Gen. x. 6, 7; Isa. xi. 11, xviii. 1, xx. 3). To our ears it sounds beautiful and evangelic that the Lord cares for the Ethiopians, and brought the Philistines into their land from Caphtor, and the Syrians into Damascus from Kir, just as He brought Israel out of Egypt to Canaan. But to Israel, with his intense sense of privilege, nothing could sound more terrible or contemptuous. Yahweh regards him only as one of the peoples of the earth! This goes a step beyond even iii. 2-3.

the LORD. Have not I brought up Israel out of the
land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the
Syrians from Kir? Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD 8
are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from
off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly
destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD. For, lo, 9
I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among
all the nations, like as *corn* is sifted in a sieve, yet shall
not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners 10

Caphtor: Crete, Deut. ii. 23; Jer. xlvii. 4. In 1 Sam. xxx. 14; Ezek. xxv. 16; Zeph. ii. 5, the Philistines are called Cherethites, i. e. Cretans.

Kir: cf. i. 5.

But while Amos has reduced Israel to one of the nations, he still regards him as Yahweh's people. 'Kindled his relentings are.' **I will destroy . . . saving that I will not utterly destroy.** Nowack and others regard the rest of the book, verses 8–15, as a Messianic addition of a later time. Of course it is impossible to exactly adjust this relenting with the finality of judgement repeatedly threatened in the book right through up to ix. 8. But to say that the true Amos ceases in the middle of this verse, and another and more hopeful hand finishes the book, is to strike out the mystery and the paradox of prophecy as the utterance of the Divine mind. It is a logical inconsistency, but yet, nay, for that reason, it is a moral truth. As one watches the clouded sky one says in successive sentences, 'There is not a touch of blue, but the blue breaks through.' When the cloud-pack is thickest, as in verses 1–6, immediately the sun of the Divine love and mercy begins to pierce it. In the absence therefore of any external evidence that these verses did not come from Amos, we may read them as the expression of that beautiful truth, 'at evening-time it shall be light.'

8. the sinful kingdom will, it is true, be destroyed, and as a kingdom cease to exist. This applies to the whole of Jacob, Southern and Northern Kingdoms alike. But a remnant shall survive. While the wicked perish, the good, like grain sifted in a sieve, shall be saved. It is of course a paradox. But to dismiss it on that account, in the interests of logical coherency, is to miss the wonder and the unexpectedness of revelation which gives an insight into the nature and dealings of God.

9. grain: it is *lit.* 'a pebble' (2 Sam. xvii. 13). Our translators have forced the word to gain sense, just as in verse 10 they have of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.

11 In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days
12 of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom,

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to constrain the verbal forms to give, as they certainly do not in the Hebrew text, the meaning which is evidently intended. Preuschen (*Z.A.T.W.*, 1895, p. 24) keeps 'pebble,' and refers to the pebbles still left in the sieve in Syria for cleansing the winnowed corn.

10. Cf. Isa. v. 19; Jer. xxiii. 17; Ezek. xii. 22, 27; Mic. iii. 11. Now the language breaks out into pure hope and the forecast of good.

11. In that day, *sc.* the day of hopeless disaster, viii. 9, 12, 13, ix. 1, 10, the better dawn will break. Wellhausen refers the bright promise to the Southern Kingdom, which is to flourish when the Northern is destroyed. But that reference is far too limited. When the Northern Kingdom fell the 'tabernacle of David,' in the sense of the monarchy at Jerusalem, was not yet fallen. And 'my people Israel' in verse 14 must mean the whole of Israel, Northern and Southern Kingdoms alike.

tabernacle of David, therefore, is evidently Messianic. Tabernacle, that is hut or tent, is used to indicate that the stately palaces of David had been reduced very low (Isa. i. 8) before this restoration took place. One of the Jewish designations of Messiah, 'the Son of the fallen,' was taken from this passage (Talmud, Sanhedr. f. 96. 2; Schoettq, *De Mess.* p. 16). When Amos wrote Azariah (Uzziah) was on the throne (2 Kings xiv. 22), and David's throne was in a flourishing condition. As Keil saw, the range of the prophecy goes quite beyond the present. By the 'tabernacle of David' Amos means the glory of the undivided kingdom, the promise which was at the beginning, which was so sadly frustrated in the historical times, but which was to receive so wonderful and spiritual a fulfilment in Christ.

days of old: viz. the golden age of the early monarchy, which always remained a prophecy of the great future, the Messianic kingdom.

12. Though the reference is really spiritual, it still remains under the form of the old historical circumstances, viz. David subduing Edom and the surrounding peoples, and bringing them into the lot of the Lord; cf. Ps. lx. 8.

remnant of Edom: because these nations will have been and all the nations, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith 13 the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall

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purged, and only the righteous remnant will come into the kingdom (i. 11, 12).

which are called by my name: rather, 'over whom my name has been called:' the phrase signifies being in the possession of Yahweh; cf. Deut. xxviii. 10; 2 Sam. xii. 28; Jer. vii. 10. David's conquests were wars of the Lord, 2 Sam. v. 19–23, xi. 11, xv. 24. James quotes the words from LXX, Acts xv. 16. Note the Greek version implies Adam for Edom, 'the remnant of men.'

These two verses may, of course, be the insertion of a later time. But there is only one reason for maintaining that they are, viz. the difficulty of thinking that the unrelieved gloom of Amos's forecasts could be thus relieved by the light at evening-time. There is nothing to hinder the prophet having seen in the future the completed ruins of Judah (cf. ii. 4, 5, iii. 1), and then, rising beyond that sad end, the restoration, the Messianic glory.

13. The closing oracle is, as Prof. G. A. Smith says, 'a very pleasant piece of music, as if the birds had come out after the thunderstorm, and the wet hills were glistening in the sunshine.'

plowman shall overtake the reaper. This indication of the teeming seasons is in the promise of Lev. xxvi. 5. Josephus also, (*Wars*, x. 8) describes this 'happy contention of the seasons' as characteristic of Galilee. But while Leviticus describes only very fruitful seasons, Amos describes a miracle, which points to spiritual rather than material fruit. So fertile would be the spiritual soil, so vast the harvest, that seed-time and harvest would fall always together. Ploughing was in October; sowing in November; barley and wheat were ripe in April-May; the vintage in August-September. When Jesus visited Samaria this took place, John iv. 35.

the treader of grapes: Judges ix. 27; Neh. xiii. 15; Isa. lxiii. 2, 3: cf. Jer. xxv. 30, xlviii. 33. This is the crowning act of the agricultural year, while the sower of the seed is the opener of the year; the two, the alpha and omega of the year's fruitfulness, flow into one.

the mountains shall drop, &c.: Joel i. 5, iii. 18. That Joel is the later appears from its more regular parallelism, and from its avoiding the unusual word for **melt** which occurs here, *tithmogagnah.* In Joel the hills flow with milk, but here they melt in

14 melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the
15 fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.

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fertilizing streams of living water and spiritual food. It is a hyperbole which is only justified by the metaphorical meaning.

This promise of blessing under the agricultural imagery is the more striking by contrast with the dearth in viii. 11–13.

14. bring again the captivity: i. e. lead back the captives, Hos. xi. 10, 11. Of course the phrase is common in the Exile: it occurs eleven times in Jeremiah; three in Ezekiel; in Deut. xxx. 3; Ps. cxxvi. 1, 4; Lam. ii. 14; Ps. xiv. 7, liii. 7; Zeph. ii. 7, iii. 20; some of these places show that it could occur before. So also Hos. vi. 11. Job xlii. 10 shows that it may have a metaphorical meaning, 'turn the fortune of a people,' and not refer to a 'captivity' in the literal sense.

vineyards . . . gardens: cf. v. 11; Deut. xxviii. 30, 33, 39.

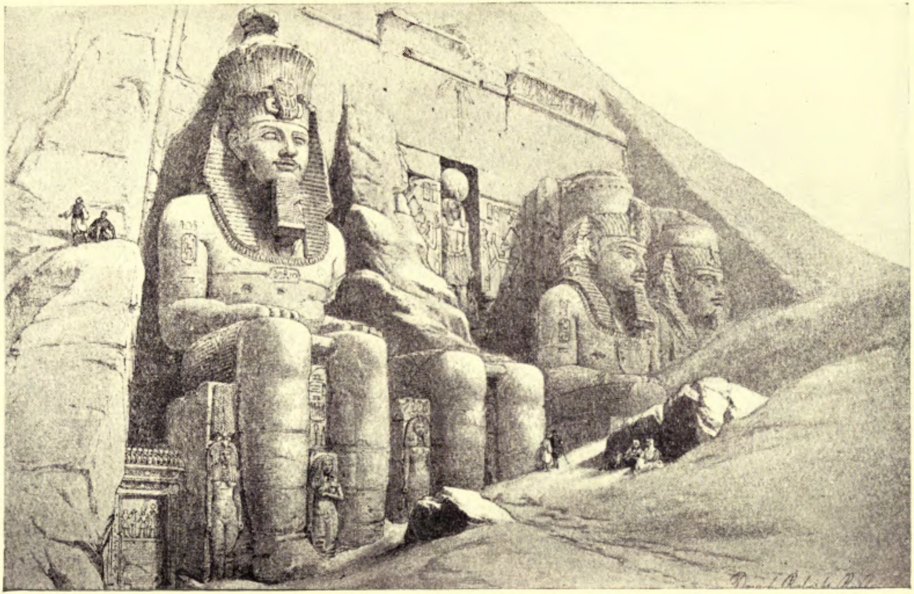
15. After the promise of the gardens, the restored people are compared to trees themselves, trees planted, not to be plucked up, as in Ps. i. 3 (cf. 2 Sam. vii. 10; Jer. xxiv. 6, xlii. 10, xlv. 4; Hos. ii. 23).

thy God: this is rich in consolation, Isa. xli. 10, lii. 7, liv. 6, lxvi. 9.

It is curious to find Wellhausen and Nowack decisively saying that ix. 8–15 cannot be from the pen of Amos. 'After the keenest soaring of his faith,' says the former, 'shall he sink back lamely into the delusion which he fought against? Shall the illusion triumph over its destroyer, the God of one's wishes over the God of historical necessity? No, a later Jew has added this conclusion and destroyed the original, because it sounded too harsh in his ears.'

These writers seem to surrender the whole notion of a real voice of God speaking through the prophets, able therefore to state the paradoxes of the Divine judgement and mercy, beyond the reach of the mere historical observer.

Prof. G. A. Smith's conclusion, that the verses cannot be from Amos, because they are devoid of ethical meaning, and prophesy a restoration without repentance, and an earthly paradise instead of the reign of righteousness, is of course far more worthy of



Drawing by David Roberts, R.A.

EGYPT: TEMPLE OF ABU SIMBEL

(*Period of the Oppression*)

consideration. But he seems too to temporarily forget the element of vision and of poetry in the work of a prophet. Amos was glowing with ethical earnestness, and following that impulse he described the inevitable ruin of the sinful nation ; but then what more Divinely natural than that, his moral conclusions being reached, he should lift up his eyes and see, unreconciled, out of all connexion with what he knew, like distant mountains, misty and unreal in the golden light of evening, the miracle of God's mercy ? The Lord would find a way of bringing back His banished ones, though Amos did not know it. He would rebuild and restore the hopeless ruins which alone the prophet's eye could see.

OBADIAH

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

OBADIAH

INTRODUCTION

THE introduction to the briefest book in the Old Testament should not be long. Pusey's tirade against those who do not accept the date, implied by the place of the book in the Canon, is as superfluous as it is interesting to the ordinary reader. Prof. Cheyne's minute analysis in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* is as repellent to the student of the Bible as it is necessary to the professional critic.

Obadiah means 'Servant of God,' and it is not an uncommon name in the O. T. (1 Kings xviii. 3–16; 1 Chron. iii. 21, vii. 3, viii. 38, ix. 16, 44, xii. 9, xxvii. 19; 2 Chron. xvii. 7, xxxiv. 12; Ezra viii. 9), though, as this list shows, it is, with the exception of Ahab's steward, a name which belongs to the later literature.

But this is all we know about the author of the book.

We are equally ignorant about the date. The book was probably inserted here in the Canon, because the prophecy in Amos ix. 12 is, according to this document, realized. The dates assigned vary by nearly six hundred years, from 889 B.C. (Hoffmann, Keil, who connect it with the narrative in 2 Chron. xxi. 8–16 belonging to the year 896 B.C.) to 312 B.C. (Hitzig and others).

The subject of the book is a denunciation of Israel's hereditary foe and neighbour, Edom, the descendants of Esau who lived in Mount Seir. The denunciation at the close passes into a general denunciation of other nations and a promise of victory to Israel.

The first part of the book (verses 1–14) is most naturally referred to the fall of Jerusalem, when Nebuchadnezzar broke up the Jewish State, 586 B.C. We know the conduct of Edom, verses 9–11, at that time, from other sources, e.g. Ps. cxxxvii; Lam. iv. 21, 22; Ezek. xxv. 8, 12, xxxv. The punishment which fell on the Edomites for their rejoicing over the fall of Israel at that time is referred to in Mal. i. 1–5, which belongs to the first half of the fifth century B.C., and forms a true counterpart to Obad. 1–7. Edom was evidently overrun, robbed, and driven from its borders by the surrounding Arabian tribes.

The second part of the book, verses 15–21, which is far less forceful and original in imagery and expression, points to a final punishment, yet in the future, in which Edom will only suffer as one of the nations that have been hostile to Israel.

But when we have thus fixed the date in the Exile or after, we are puzzled by finding the first five verses of our book in an *earlier prophet*, viz. in Jer. xlix. 14–16, 9, and in such a form and connexion that we are compelled to think Obadiah the more original. The explanation of this may be either (1) that Obadiah and Jeremiah both quote from an older author (so Ewald, Graf, &c.); or (2) that the passage in Jeremiah is much later than Jeremiah's time, and the quotation was inserted from our Book of Obadiah.

We may therefore for convenience' sake assume that Obadiah is a contemporary of Malachi or even later; and if we might rearrange the Canon, we should do well to place his book immediately before Malachi, and not just after Amos.

Though it is impossible to follow Pusey in his passionate defence of the date implied by the place of the book in the Canon, and while it is strange to see the ingenuity with which, in view of verse 20, he declares that, 'so far from writing among the exiles, Obadiah implies that the Captivity had not yet commenced,' it is a pleasure to quote his analysis of the book, showing the connexion of thought: '(1) God had commanded nations to come against Edom, (2) determining to lower it; (3) it had trusted proudly in its strong position; (4) yet God would bring it down; and that (5) through no ordinary spoiler, but (6) by one who should search out its most hidden treasures; (7) its friends should be its destroyers; (8) its wisdom and (9) might should fail it, and (10) it should perish for its malice to its brother Jacob; the crowning act of which would be at the capture of Jerusalem; (11–14) but God's day was at hand, the heathen should be requited; (15–16) the remnant of Zion, being delivered, would dispossess their possessors, and would spread far and wide; (17–20) a Saviour should arise out of Zion, and the kingdom should be the Lord's (21).'

And Pusey's quotation from Hugo of St. Victor may put us on the track of deriving a true spiritual lesson from the little book: 'Obadiah is simple in language, manifold in meaning; few in words, abundant in thoughts, according to that "the wise man is known by the fewness of his words." He directeth his prophecy, according to the letter, against Edom; allegorically he inveighs against the world; morally against the flesh. Bearing an image of the Saviour, he hinteth at His coming through whom the world is destroyed, through whom the flesh is subdued, through whom freedom is restored.'

OBADIAH

THE vision of Obadiah.

Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom: We 1 have heard tidings from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the nations, *saying*, Arise ye, and let us

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1. The title is, **The Vision of Obadiah.**

Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom introduces a quotation from an older prophet, the quotation used also by Jeremiah, xlix. 14–16, 7–9. Jeremiah, however, quotes it: 'I have heard.' Obadiah probably keeps to the original **We have heard,** the 'We' being prophet and people alike. We are able from Jeremiah to fix the quotation as far as verse 5. From 'We have heard' to 'gleaning grapes' should therefore be in inverted commas.

This quotation, threatening from of old the destruction of Edom, is given before the punishment, which followed on their ill-will to Israel in 586 B. C., is described. It is as if Obadiah wished to say: The harrying of Edom by the Arabs as a punishment for the violence done to Jacob is only the fulfilment of a doom long foretold; and the doom already fulfilled when Obadiah writes is only the prelude to the more complete and final fulfilment of that old prophecy.

Arise ye: Yahweh sent an ambassador to the neighbouring peoples to rouse them to form a confederacy against Edom (cf. Isa. xiii. 4 for the mustering of the nations). The hatred between Edom and Israel is typified in the story of Esau and Jacob. Edom occupied the mountainous strip, one hundred miles by twenty, which looked over the desert eastward and the Arabah westward. His rocky valleys were impregnable and fertile. His capital, Petra, was perched high up in the mountains, and very largely excavated out of the rocks. One picturesque feature of Petra is preserved in a famous prize poem:—

> 'Show me its equal save in Eastern clime,
> A rose-red city, half as old as time.'

He commanded the trade-routes, from the harbour of Akaba into which the gold-ships came from Ophir, and from Damascus to Gaza. He was therefore rich. He was like his ancestor Esau, wild and godless and worldly, caring only for material possessions. This brother estranged Israel hated. For a thousand years, from David, 1030 B.C., to John Hyrcanus, 130 B.C., who dragged the Idumaeans beneath the law, we find them in relentless strife. At the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar Edom exulted; and again at the

2 rise up against her in battle. Behold, I have made thee
small among the nations: thou art greatly despised.
3 The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, O thou
that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation
is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me
4 down to the ground? Though thou mount on high as
the eagle, and though thy nest be set among the stars,
5 I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD. If
thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou
cut off!) would they not steal till they had enough? if

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fall of Jerusalem before the Roman armies certain implacable Edomites survived to exult. The Herods were Idumaeans, and they ruled and harried Israel up to the time of the Saviour, who came up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau.

While therefore there is in this prophecy no ethical or religious ground alleged for the eternal feud, and the bitter cry of exultation over Edom's calamity sounds essentially Pagan, a broader view of the case may justify the prophet's attitude. Israel stands in a sense for the ideals, the spiritual aspirations, the discipline, which prepared the world for Christ. Edom was expressed in that word applied to its king, 'Go thou and tell that fox.'

2. small. It was but a little nation always. But the smallness here is the result of defeat and subjection.

greatly: cf. Jer. xlix. 15.

3. rock: i. e. Sela, the Edomite capital, in Greek 'Petra.' Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* vi. 32) says the houses of the town were hewn out of the rock. And Jerome says that in the southern part of the country caves were used for dwellings, and subterranean dwellings were preferred because of the fierce heat of the sun. The traveller Schubert, contemplating the remains of these rocky dwellings, exclaims, 'Had then the ancient builders of these rock-works wings like the eagle, with which they raised themselves to those perpendicular precipices?'

4. It is Yahweh who decrees the punishment of the pride which defies Him.

I will bring thee down: cf. Amos ix. 2. The curious phrase in Heb., 'set thy nest,' in the infinitive, occurs in Balaam's prophecy, Num. xxiv. 21, and nowhere else.

5. till they had enough: the sense requires us to understand 'only till they had enough.' But these are no common thieves who are to accomplish the ruin of Edom; they will go on destroying when they have taken all the property they want, for

grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave some
gleaning grapes? How are *the things of* Esau searched 6
out! how are his hidden treasures sought up! All the 7
men of thy confederacy have brought thee on thy way,
even to the border: the men that were at peace with
thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee;
they that eat thy bread lay a snare under thee: there is
none understanding in him. Shall I not in that day, saith 8
the LORD, destroy the wise men out of Edom, and
understanding out of the mount of Esau? And thy 9

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the sake of destroying; they are grape-gatherers who will leave no gleanings: cf. Jer. xlix. 9. The sense is made clear by verse 7. Verse 6 is a parenthesis. The former friends of Edom literally extrude them from their land of mountain fastnesses.

6. An exclamation, as if the prophet saw the raiding hosts penetrate into the remotest valleys and caves of Edom, dragging out men and treasure. It is more graphic in the brevity of the original: 'How are they searched out—Esau, his hidden treasures sought up!'

7. men of thy confederacy: not thieves or grape-gatherers, but their own familiar friends, viz. neighbouring nomadic tribes with which Edom had been in alliance, but which in this time of vengeance have made a raid upon him and completely vanquished him. This event connects itself with the general forward movement of the Arabian tribes in the sixth century. It is not, however, till 312 B.C. that we have historical notice of Petra being occupied, and then it was by the Nabathaeans, who were Aramaic and not Arabian (Diodorus, *Sic.* 19. 94). In Ps. lxxxiii. 7 the Arabic name 'Gebal' is used for Seir (Wellhausen).

to the border: not merely stealing a few things, like thieves, but ruthlessly ejecting the inhabitants of the land.

thy bread: not in LXX, probably inserted by an error in reading the letters of the previous word. It is simply: 'they lay a snare for thee.'

none understanding in him: viz. in Esau. It seems (cf. Jer. xlix. 7) that the Edomites prided themselves on their wits, probably attributing to their own ability the security which they had gained from their isolation and their mountain ramparts.

8. Hitherto the scene of Edom's humiliation has been described as if it were an accomplished fact. But we see from the future tense which now prevails that the events were only present to the prophet's eye. It is not necessary, though it is possible, with

mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end
that every one may be cut off from the mount of Esau
10 by slaughter. For the violence done to thy brother
Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off
11 for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other
side, in the day that strangers carried away his substance,
and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon

Nowack, to regard verses 8, 9 as a quotation, like verses 1, 5, from an earlier prophecy. For destruction of the wise cf. Isa. xxix. 14.

9. For **Teman** see Amos i. 12. Eliphaz, the representative of human wisdom in Job (iv. 1), was a Temanite.

by slaughter. This word, says Nowack, belongs to the next verse (so LXX): 'for the slaughter and the violence done to the brother,' &c.

10. Here comes the central point of the book. The crowning vengeance against Esau is to come for his crowning outrage to his brother Jacob, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Deut. xxiii. 7, 8 shows how Jacob ought to feel to Edom.

For (this use of the preposition translated 'for' belongs to the late Hebrew, Wellhausen) **the violence done to thy brother Jacob,** &c.: not only in the final fall of Jerusalem, but in former times; cf. Amos i. 11 and Num. xx. 14.

shame shall cover thee: cf. Mic. vii. 10.

11. This leaves no doubt that the fall of Jerusalem under the Chaldeans is meant, whether Obadiah saw it as an accomplished fact, or, according to Pusey's strange dogmatic conviction, foresaw it three centuries before the event[1].

stoodest on the other side: or rather, 'stoodest by,' i. e. without intervening; for the phrase cf. 2 Sam. xviii. 13; 2 Kings ii. 7; Ps. xxxviii. 11.

his substance. The word might mean the army, the military force; but from verse 13 it seems more likely to mean the treasures of Jerusalem. Isa. viii. 4, x. 14.

cast lots: see Joel iii. 3.

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[1] It is characteristic of Pusey that, when Ewald recognized the date of Obadiah as late, the Oxford scholar could see no motive for this interference with the traditional view which placed the book next to Amos in the Canon but unbelief and the dislike to admit the forecasts of prophecy! Pusey's method and spirit would to-day produce unbelief in Scripture. If Scripture is to be respected and believed, it must be treated with candour, an open mind, and a readiness to admit truth from whatever quarter it may come.

Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But look 12
not thou on the day of thy brother in the day of his
disaster, and rejoice not over the children of Judah in
the day of their destruction; neither speak proudly in
the day of distress. Enter not into the gate of my 13
people in the day of their calamity; yea, look not thou

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thou wast as one of them. This brief and bitter remark, 'Thou wast as one of the Chaldeans,' is more trenchant than if all the enormities of robbery, rape and murder had been enumerated.

12. This sudden change to the imperative, implying that the event had not yet happened, is very perplexing, and on it Pusey chiefly relies for arguing that Obadiah was only contemplating the ruin of Jerusalem centuries before. But how incredible that Obadiah should first forecast the cruel spite of the Edomites centuries before, and then proceed to forbid them to exhibit it, in verses 12–14! And though the words are in form addressed to Edom, we have no reason to think that the Hebrew prophet sent or spoke the words to the stranger. We cannot therefore think of him trying to 'dehort' Edom, as Pusey says, centuries before, from a course of proceedings which had not yet come within view. The difficulty is lessened, though not removed, if we connect the verses with what follows in verse 15. After seeing the actual outrages of Edom, the prophet exclaims: 'Do it not . . . do it not . . . for the day of the Lord is near.' And so our A. V. tried to twist the grammar and to render the imperative, 'Thou shouldest not have looked,' &c. Probably Wellhausen's suggestion is the best: he transposes the two clauses of verse 15. And thus the passage reads as a dramatic argument: 'Look not thou on the day of thy brother . . . enter not in the gate . . . stand thou not in the crossway . . .,' i. e. better for thee if thou hadst not done this, for, 'as thou hast done it shall be done unto thee; thy dealing shall return upon thine own head.' Then would follow the first clause of verse 15, 'For the day of the Lord is near.'

But look not. It is the usual Hebrew conjunction, and, as Wellhausen says, an imperative with *vau* could hardly occur without a previous imperative. He therefore transposes verses 12 and 13. But he also thinks verse 12 is a later insertion, a repetition of verse 13 in different words.

look not: viz. with pleasure; Ps. xxii. 17.

day of his disaster: *sc.* strangerhood; cf. Job xxxi. 3.

rejoice not: malignantly; Ps. xxxv. 19, 24, xxxviii. 16.

speak proudly: *lit.* 'make large thy mouth,' *sc.* with laughter (Ps. xxxv. 21; Isa. lvii. 4; Ezek. xxxv. 13).

on their affliction in the day of their calamity, neither lay ye *hands* on their substance in the day of their calamity.
14 And stand thou not in the crossway, to cut off those of his that escape; and deliver not up those of his that
15 remain in the day of distress. For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy dealing shall return upon thine
16 own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the nations drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and swallow down, and shall be as though
17 they had not been. But in mount Zion there shall be

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13. lay ye hands. Ewald and Olshausen corrected the Heb. *tishlachnah* into *tishlach jad*, 'thou shalt not stretch out a hand.'

The threefold **in the day of their calamity** Wellhausen thinks suspicious.

14. the crossway: a word not elsewhere found. It should mean 'clearing'; LXX *diekbolé*, a pass between the mountains. It suggests that the Edomites occupied the defiles from Jerusalem to Jericho, and cut off any unhappy Jews who were trying to escape.

15. Here the prophecy widens and Edom only appears as a typical enemy of Yahweh, who is to be punished with the rest in the universal triumph of Israel. The remaining verses are by comparison with 1–14 somewhat tame and trite.

the day of the LORD: Joel i. 15, ii. 1, 31; for the Nemesis cf. Joel iii. 7.

all the nations: this widening of the eschatological outlook began in Ezekiel, whom doubtless Obadiah followed, as also did Joel (Ezek. xxxviii).

15ᵇ. Edom's sins shall fall on his own head; cf. Ps. vii. 16.

16. as ye have drunk. The prophet turns and addresses the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The drinking is that of the cup of wrath (cf. Zech. xii. 2). As Yahweh had made His people suffer, so now He will punish the nations that were His instruments (cf. Jer. xxv).

shall . . . swallow down: so Keil, using a Syrian analogue; Delitzsch translated it 'speak error' (Job vi. 3; Prov. xx. 25); Wellhausen would correct the word from Lam. iv. 2, and translate 'reel.'

shall be as though, &c.: after drinking that cup of wrath they will be annihilated.

those that escape, and it shall be holy; and the house
of Jacob shall possess their possessions. And the house 18
of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame,
and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall burn
among them, and devour them: and there shall not be
any remaining to the house of Esau; for the LORD hath
spoken it. And they of the South shall possess the 19
mount of Esau; and they of the lowland the Philistines:
and they shall possess the field of Ephraim, and the field

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17. those that escape: Joel iii. 5, iv. 17.

house of Jacob (Nahum ii. 2): not, then, only the men of Judah, but the whole family of Israel shall share in the glad restoration.

their possessions. The LXX reads, 'those who have disinherited them.'

18. house of Jacob...house of Joseph. The Northern Israelites are now in this fair vision of ultimate victory united with their Southern brethren (cf. Jer. xxxi. 18; Ezek. xxxvii. 16; Zech. x. 6). In Isa. xi. 13, &c. this united overthrowing of Edom is foretold.

The image of fire and stubble is common: Isa. i. 31, v. 24, x. 17, xxxiii. 14; Zech. xii. 6.

19. they of the South (the Negeb) . . . **they of the lowland** (the Shephelah). Wellhausen decides on grammatical grounds that the two phrases **the mount of Esau** and **the Philistines** are in apposition to the two other phrases, and are therefore interpolated. He will not admit that 'the Negeb' and 'the Shephelah' can be subjects. We must render therefore: 'And they, i. e. the victorious Jacob and Joseph, shall possess the Negeb, viz. the southern hills of Judah, which the Idumaeans in later times had occupied (Ezek. xxxv. 10); and the Shephelah, the south-western lowlands of Palestine, once occupied by the Philistines' (Joshua x. 40, xi. 2).

The Negeb had become part of **the mount of Esau,** Ezek. xxxv. 10, &c., xxxvi. 5; 1 Macc. iv. 29, 61, v. 65; and the Shephelah was overrun again by the Philistines when the Jews went into exile.

Prof. G. A. Smith keeps our R. V., 'The Negeb shall possess mount Esau, and the Shephelah the Philistines.' But then he goes to the LXX for the next clause, 'the mountain (i. e. the rest of Judah, outside the Negeb and the Shephelah) shall possess Ephraim and the field of Samaria.'

they shall possess the field of Ephraim, and the field of

20 of Samaria: and Benjamin *shall possess* Gilead. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel, which are *among* the Canaanites, *shall possess* even unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in
21 Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the South. And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S.

Samaria. Wellhausen is right in saying that the text must be corrupt. As it stands it only gives the tame promise that the restored exiles will reoccupy the old territory of the Northern Kingdom, Ephraim and Samaria, and Benjamin shall reappear (cf. Joshua xviii. 28, xv. 8, xviii. 16) to possess Gilead!

20. Wellhausen and Nowack despair of this verse. The exiles of the Northern Kingdom shall be settled again in the North, and those of the Southern Kingdom in the South, in this new Messianic time. So much for the general sense. But to get anything more, except by conjecture, is impossible.

the captivity of this host. It is impossible to say what this refers to.

which are among **the Canaanites** is meaningless, and there is no verb. Prof. G. A. Smith turns again to the LXX and obtains 'shall possess the land of the Canaanites unto Zarephath' (a town between Tyre and Zidon, 1 Kings xvii. 9).

the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad. We do not know what Sepharad is. Cheyne thinks it was Çparda of the Behistun Inscriptions, in Bithynia or Galatia, and says 'the language is quite consistent with a date in the Persian period.' Schrader thinks it was Šaparda of the Sargon Inscriptions, in Babylonia. If this latter were established we should know that Obadiah was among the exiles in Babylon, and spoke from that standpoint.

the cities of the South (Negeb): cf. for the cities of Judah there, Joshua xv. 21 ff.

21. saviours. The LXX reads 'those who were saved.' We may take the obscure language as the gleam of a Divine sunshine in a driving mist. As we are uncertain of the details in the resettlement of the exiles spoken of in verses 19, 20, so we are uncertain of the reference in the saviours who are to judge the mount of Esau. But the great word **the kingdom shall be the LORD'S,** closing the oracle which began 'the day of the Lord is near,' permits us to feel, if not to see, in the saying 'saviours shall come up,' something more than a mere victorious army asserting the supremacy of Israel. This prophet too, dealing only with an age-long enmity and with a threatened judgement, is impelled by the prophetic spirit, and sees 'saviours' climbing mount Zion. It is hardly relevant to ask what he meant; but what he *saw* was the Saviour of the World, the Saviour who is judge, the Saviour of whom it is said by the latest of Biblical prophets, 'the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ.' Scientific exegesis sees nothing of this sort in these words; but we may venture to say it is there.

JONAH

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

JONAH

INTRODUCTION

THE little book of 'Jonah' touches the high-water mark of Old Testament theology. No other pre-Christian writer quite reaches the universalism which it implies. Yahweh, Israel's God, is seen as the God of the heathen too, concerned for the Assyrian, the most cruel and rapacious power in the world, calling a great pagan city to repentance, and accepting the signs of contrition. Meanwhile the Israelite is presented as shrinking from the missionary enterprise, and when his message of doom was delivered, bitterly annoyed because Yahweh in His mercy had spared the heathen. Here the prophetic message rises above the particularism of Israel, and God appears as the God of all flesh, calling all to repentance, willing to have mercy upon all.

There can therefore be no doubt about the religious and theological value of this book. And furthermore it teems with human interest: the action of the pagan sailors, and their conversion, are a beautiful study in soteriology, reminding us of the legend of St. Ursula. The great heathen city, and its docility and obedience to a prophetic message, are finely conceived. The very cattle joining in the penitence, and the Lord caring for the cattle as well as the innocent children, give a broad humanitarian atmosphere to the composition.

We cannot therefore wonder that Christ used the book on a memorable occasion in his teaching, nor that it was the means of the conversion of Cyprian, concerning whom

Jerome tells us that when he was a gay and thoughtless noble, 'sermonem Ionae audiisse et ad Deum conversum.'

When, however, we examine the form in which this theological truth has been conveyed to us, the traditional view, which Pusey vehemently defended, that the book was written by Jonah himself, who is mentioned in 2 Kings xiv. 25, and that it is inserted here in the *Book of the Twelve Prophets* as a writing of the time of Jeroboam II, contemporary with Hosea and Amos, finds no internal support. There is no hint that Jonah is the writer, nor is there any utterance of Jonah recorded in the book, except the Psalm in ch. ii which cannot be his, and the announcement in iii. 4 which bears no autographic stamp. The book is not in any way similar to the prophetic writings of Hosea and Amos, which, though they contain brief historical narratives, are in the main prophetic utterances vouched for by the speakers, but it is a narrative pure and simple, which professes to recount an event of long ago. Indeed the Hebrew expression in iii. 3, 'Nineveh was an exceeding great city,' implies that it had been, but had now ceased to be. And as Nineveh fell and was practically destroyed in 606 B.C., we are at any rate carried down to a date a century and a half after the historic Jonah Ben-Amittai. On the other hand, the form of the narrative reminds us of the legendary history of Elijah and Elisha which is incorporated in the Book of Kings. We may therefore, with Prof. Budde, regard the book as a Midrash to the Book of Kings (cf. 2 Chron. xxiv. 27). A Midrash is defined by Prof. Driver as 'an imaginative development of a thought or theme suggested by Scripture, especially a didactic or homiletic exposition or an edifying religious story.' Tobit and Susanna are Midrashim properly left outside the Canon, Jonah is a Midrash properly included in it.

Prof. Driver does not doubt that tradition recorded a visit of Jonah to Nineveh. Jonah prophesied to Jeroboam, or his predecessor, that the border of Israel should be restored from Hamath to the Arabah. And that restoration was rendered possible by the incursions made into Syria by the Assyrian kings, Shalmaneser III (782–773) and Assurdam III (772–754). The power of Damascus was crippled by these calamities, and Israel seized the opportunity to expand. The historical Jonah had therefore a direct interest in Nineveh; and it is conceivable that he journeyed to the great city with a call of repentance from Yahweh.

The author of our book, however, did not depend on tradition. He was at liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to shape his story with a view to edification. He composed such events as would best illustrate the truths which he wished to convey, precisely in the same way that our Lord composed his parables. The modern dragoman points out the house of the Good Samaritan! It is equally gratuitous to cite historical support for the Book of Jonah. The story is composed with a purpose; the purpose is what we are concerned with; the story is merely a vehicle.

When did the writer live and write? The only indications for settling that question are to be found in the style and in the references. He quotes Joel ii. 14 (Jonah iii. 9), and we have seen reason to put Joel very late in the line of prophets. It seems also more than probable that the whole story of the great fish is a development of Jer. li. 34, 44. Prof. Cheyne thinks that the combination of allegory and myth, which he sees in the story, is best explained by this striking parallel in the great prophet.

Then the style belongs to the later Hebrew. The words and forms conclusive of a post-exilic date must be cited, *shathak* (i. 12), *keriah* (iii. 2), *ta-am* (iii. 7), *'amal*, 'to labour' (iv. 10), *ribbo* (iv. 11), *minnah* (ii. 1, iv. 6, 7), *beshelmi* (i. 7), *beshelli* (i. 12), *shebin* (iv. 10). Prof. Driver also cites as marks of a later age *sephinah* (i. 5), *hith-*

ashsheth (i. 6), in the sense of 'to think,' found elsewhere only in the Aramaic of Dan. vi. 4 and the Targums.

Prof. G. A. Smith considers the style shows most affinity with Ezra and Nehemiah. This would bring the date of the book to the beginning of the third century B.C., in time for it to be included in the Canon of the Prophets, which was closed about 200 B.C. (Ecclus. xlix. 10).

When the character and the date of the book are thus determined we are relieved from Pusey's laboured attempts to vindicate the historical veracity of the narratives. It is humiliating for a commentator to collect doubtful stories of sailors swallowed by sharks and vomited out alive. Mr. Frank Bullen's account of the cachalot whale shows conclusively that the sea contains a fish which could swallow a man without injuring him. And such facts would give colour to our author's narrative. But we are engaged on quite the wrong line of defence when we attempt to defend the Book of Jonah in that way. The story of the whale and that of the rapidly growing gourd are to be ranked with the story of the lions and the trees of the land of Beulah in the *Pilgrim's Progress.*

And directly we recognize the nature of the book we see at once that everything reminds us that we are not dealing with historical material. The name of the Ninevite king is not given; the suddenness of the conversion of Nineveh would be hard to authenticate in view of Nahum's terrific oracle against it; and Jonah is left seated there in face of the spared city; is it conceivable that a historical writer would omit to tell us how the Lord's rebuke affected him? But these very points are all consistent with the nature and scope of Midrash: the facts are composed to illustrate the truth, and the truth established, the facts may fall away.

The Psalm, too, in ch. ii confirms this view. It is clearly inserted. Verse 10 follows immediately verse 1. The writer inserted this Psalm for edification. It is composed of several passages from the Psalter, but no part of it is appropriate to the situation in 'the fish's belly.' It is rather a thanksgiving for deliverance already accomplished, and the details refer to a man nearly drowned in the depths of the sea, with the seaweeds wrapped about his head, and not to one in the extraordinary position of Jonah.

Prof. Cheyne interprets the allegory of the book in the light of Jer. li. 34, 44. Jonah represents Israel; the whale is Babylon, which swallows Israel in the Exile, but restóres him in due time. This is rather frigid, like the attempts to allegorize the *Idylls of the King*. May not an inspired writer tell a story in his own way with its obvious message? Directly we dismiss the distracting necessity of defending the events as facts, and give our attention to the story merely for the lessons it contains, we read a far more instructive homily than if it were a perfunctory myth seeking to describe the Exile, for which there was no adequate reason moral or spiritual.

The story gives its own moral: the impossibility of evading the Divine purpose; the natural piety of men who know not the true religion; the power of God to deliver; the desire of God to bring all to repentance; the readiness of God to forgive the penitent; the rebuke to a prophet who is more concerned with the establishment of His word than with the saving of men; the humanity of God who cares for men and babes and cattle. These are truths which are never out of date. They were preached in this brief pictorial sermon by a man of genius; and the little book will be read and loved as long as men have childlike hearts, and can defy the mordant tooth of a soulless criticism.

With regard to the historic Jonah, we may add that his birthplace and reputed tomb place him very near to the scenes of our Lord's childhood. A mile south of Kefr Kenna (Cana) is Jiftah, a corruption of Gath-hepher (2 Kings xiv. 25), and on a neighbouring hill tradition places Jonah's tomb.

Jesus of Nazareth would think of Jonah as a fellow countryman, and would read the book about him in the sacred Canon with a double interest, finding in it the forecast of his world-wide mission, and the symbol of his death and resurrection.

JONAH

Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son 1
of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, 2
and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up
before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish 3
from the presence of the LORD; and he went down to

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i. **1.** All that we know of the historic Jonah is contained in 2 Kings xiv. 25. See Introduction. The name means 'a dove.' Gath-hepher, where the prophet lived, was in Zebulon, later Galilee of the Gentiles. He lived, as it were, on the highway of the nations, and the doings of the great world-power at Nineveh would readily reach his ears. The opening of the book, which is in the Hebrew, 'And the word of the Lord came to Jonah,' suggests that it was once part of a larger whole, a Midrash to 2 Kings xiv. 25 (Budde), or a chapter written for the *Book of the Twelve Prophets* (Smend). But 1 Samuel, Ruth, and Ezra all begin with the simple conjunction in the same way.

2. that great city. In the Hebrew 'the great city.' The vastness of the city lived in story long after its fall, Gen. x. 12; Strabo xvi. 1. 3; Diod. ii. 3. Its cruelty and bloodshed are recorded in its own histories and bas-reliefs; cf. Nahum ii. 11, 12.

come up. Yahweh sits in the heavens.

3. Why did Jonah shirk the mission? Because his heart told him that God was so merciful that He would forgive and not execute His wrath on Nineveh, iv. 2.

Tarshish. Tartessus in Spain, on the Baetis (Guadalquivir); Gen. x. 4; Ps. xlvii. 7; Jer. x. 9; Ezek. xxviii. 12, 25: as far west as he could get, when he was ordered to go east.

Joppa (Acts ix. 36): to-day Jaffa[1], the only tolerable port on the coast of Palestine (Joshua xix. 46; Ezra iii. 7).

from the presence: i. e. out of the holy land where Yahweh dwelt (cf. Gen. iv. 14; 1 Sam. xxvi. 19; 2 Kings xvii. 20, 23). So Wellhausen and Nowack. But this rather primitive idea would hardly occur in so late a book as Jonah. And as Pusey

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[1] It was here that Andromeda, in the Greek myth, was chained. And the monster which Perseus slew is by mythologists naturally connected with Jonah's whale.

Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid
the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them
4 unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. But the
LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was
a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to
5 be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried
every man unto his god; and they cast forth the wares
that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it unto them.
But Jonah was gone down into the innermost parts of
6 the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. So the ship-
master came to him, and said unto him, What meanest
thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that
7 God will think upon us, that we perish not. And they

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urges, the phrase is not 'from the presence,' but 'from before the face of,' which may mean the standing before God as His servant to receive His messages (cf. 1 Kings xviii. 15, Elijah says: 'The Lord of hosts . . . before whom I stand'). So Cain fled from before the presence of the Lord when he ceased to be the obedient servant of God. This is the interpretation of Aben Ezra.

with them: *sc.* the crew and passengers of the ship. It would be a Phoenician ship. Israel never, except in the ideal allotments of Joshua, got down to the sea. In historic times the coasts were all occupied by Philistines, Phoenicians, or other Canaanites, just as Wales and Cornwall were held by the fugitive Britons who were beaten back by the advancing Saxons.

4. sent out: rather, 'cast.'

was like to be: *lit.* 'thought to be broken,' as if the ship had life and shuddered at her threatened doom.

5. The sailors were, like sailors now, of many nationalities, and superstitious, if not religious.

to lighten it unto them: it is 'to lighten from upon them,' i. e. to lighten the burden which weighed them down. Thus their wealth was lost through Jonah's sin, though their lives were saved through Jonah's penitence. It is impossible to sin against God and not injure some one somehow.

innermost parts: cf. Ezek. xxxii. 23; Amos vi. 10. The word here for **ship,** *ṣephinah*, is Aramaic and Arabic.

6. shipmaster: master of the ropesmen (in Ezekiel, 'pilots'), a picturesque name for a captain (Ezek. xxvii. 8, 27-29).

will think upon us. The Aramaic word may be compared with that in Dan. vi. 4. The captain did not recognize Jonah as

said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots,
that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us.
So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then 8
said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose
cause this evil is upon us; what is thine occupation?
and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and
of what people art thou? And he said unto them, I am 9
an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven,
which hath made the sea and the dry land. Then were 10
the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, What is
this that thou hast done? For the men knew that he
fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told

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a prophet or an Israelite, but only as a man who like the rest must have a tutelary deity to whom to pray.

7. Jonah has come up to the deck with the captain. When the storm continues, the idea occurs to superstitious minds that some one—surely that passenger sleeping below—must be guilty. This, of course, is a natural device for a story-teller, but is not paralleled by anything we know of ancient seafaring. The community of those who go down to the sea in ships could hardly survive if every storm demanded a victim from among themselves.

for whose cause: the word is Aramaic, belonging only to the later language.

8. for whose cause this evil is upon us. This was unnecessary, as the lot had decided. The Hebrew words are curious. In many codices they are wanting. We may safely treat them as a gloss on verse 7, which crept into the text.

9. Jonah does not tell his occupation. Shame holds his tongue. His nationality is Hebrew (so Gen. xl. 15; Exod. ii. 7, iii. 18, &c.).

I fear the LORD. The danger, as so often, has revived the religious sense. Jonah to these heathen shipmen witnesses a good confession: while the magnificent designation of his God strikes terror into their breasts. Such a God—and His servant disobeying—no wonder He is wroth!

10. What is this? not a question but an expression of horror; cf. Gen. iii. 13.

because he had told them: a later addition (Wellhausen, Nowack).

11 them. Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto
thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea
12 grew more and more tempestuous. And he said unto
them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so
shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my
13 sake this great tempest is upon you. Nevertheless the
men rowed hard to get them back to the land; but they
could not: for the sea grew more and more tempestuous
14 against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and
said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us
not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us
innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it

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11. These pagan sailors appear in an agreeable light. They appreciate Jonah's candour and penitence, and are sufficiently impressed by him to ask him to fix his own doom. Their effort to save him from it, in verse 13, is a credit to unenlightened humanity. The theory of total depravity does not hold as we learn more of the benevolence which exists even among savages. See Prince Krapotkin's *Mutual Aid*. It is said, for instance, that the Hottentots were kindly to one another before their contact with Europeans; and the Zulus and Kaffirs, uncontaminated by contact with the whites, have virtues which we might well pray for; cruelty to children and impurity are not found among them.

may be calm unto us: *lit.* 'may become quiet from upon us,' as if it were towering up and crashing down on their decks in ruin.

grew more and more: *lit.* 'went on,' might we say 'ran high,' a Hebrew idiom; cf. Prov. iv. 18 (where the phrase is otherwise rendered) and 1 Sam. ii. 26; 2 Sam. iii. 1, xv. 12.

12. for my sake: another late Aramaic form.

13. rowed: *lit.* 'dug,' i. e. ploughed the sea. The sails were by now useless, torn to shreds, the mast gone by the board. They made a final effort with the oars.

grew more and more: verse 11, 'ran high.'

14. The pagans began at once to pray to Yahweh, Jonah's God, that He might not punish them for putting Jonah to death as they now felt bound to do. The conversion to the worship of Yahweh is sudden.

innocent blood. They believe him on his own confession to be guilty. But if he had misled them they might incur the wrath of Heaven for punishing the innocent; Joel iv. 19.

hast done as it pleased thee: by the lot; 1 Sam. iii. 18.

pleased thee. So they took up Jonah, and cast him 15
forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.
Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly; and they 16
offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows. And 17
the LORD prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah;
and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and
three nights. Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his **2**
God out of the fish's belly. And he said, 2

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16. When the sea grew calm their conversion was complete. They became worshippers of Yahweh and offered sacrifices to Him at once. Thus Jonah's penitence had immediately, at his own cost, accomplished a missionary end *in partibus infidelium*.

17. a great fish. The species is not designated. The cachalot whale, which has been seen in the Mediterranean, can easily swallow a man, or even a small boat. Sharks have swallowed men and vomited them out alive. Keil tries to show by instances that this is possible. Pusey denounces all who deny it as infidels. Orelli tries to diminish the wonder of the three days and three nights by showing that it only means 'over twenty-four hours.' But no one who reads these ingenious apologies for the miracle can feel that real faith is established by such precarious parallels. If there were solid reason for thinking that we were here dealing with a historical narrative, or an autograph writing of Jonah Ben-Amittai, we should simply have to say that the miracle was a signal act of the Divine interposition; and while a godless science would reject the story, the devout believer would accept it among the mysteries of faith, as millions have done for all these Christian centuries. But a searching criticism has relieved us from a great embarrassment. It is now plain that the Midrash is not narrative of fact, but a story with striking incidents composed to illustrate a religious message. The great fish no longer needs to be determined. How a man could live in its belly for three days has no longer to be explained. These are but the apparatus, the imaginative apparatus, of a Divine truth. God knows how to deliver His erring servants: the seas cannot devour them, the grave cannot hold them. In Him they live and move and have their being. How the form of the story may have been derived from Jer. li. 34, 44 is shown in the Introduction.

ii. 1. Originally, it is evident, verse 10 followed immediately on verse 1, for the prayer in verses 2–9 is not a prayer for deliverance at all, but a thanksgiving after it has been accomplished. It is

I called by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD,
And he answered me;
Out of the belly of hell cried I,
And thou heardest my voice.

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astonishing how Pusey can think he serves the cause of truth by ignoring this, and by suggesting that Jonah was first thrown into the depths of the sea, where the weeds were wrapt about his head, and then he was, as it were, rescued by the fish swallowing him! This borders on the grotesque, and reminds us of the verse:—

> 'A lady bathing on the beach
> Was carried far beyond her reach;
> A shark, attracted by the sound,
> Just saved the girl from being drowned.'

It is a far truer reverence which shrinks from these harmonistic absurdities, and frankly recognizes that the prayer of Jonah is a cento of passages from the Psalms, put into his mouth, perhaps by a later hand, like the prayer of Hannah in the book of Samuel.

2. I called. It is evident that the experience is a past one; this is the thanksgiving for a deliverance accomplished. It will be equally evident that the experience was not that of being in a fish's belly, to which there is no reference in the prayer, but that of being plunged into the depths of the sea, **the belly of hell,** 'the pit.' The references also to the temple show that the words come from the Southern Kingdom, and from the circle in which the temple was the acknowledged centre of the cultus. In Jonah's time the Northern Kingdom was cut off from it; Israel's religious centre was Beth-el (Amos vii. 13). But while the prayer is not appropriate to the belly of the fish, and is a cento of ideas and phrases found in the Psalms, it is in itself a beautiful and helpful outpouring of a pious soul that has escaped a terrible danger; while the whole book is rich in religious teaching, this passage is a real addition to the literature of devotion. It may have been composed by the author of the book, and inserted later; but that is not probable, he would have placed the thanksgiving after the deliverance. More probably a later prophet or Psalmist, missing the substance of Jonah's prayer, composed this little song and inserted it between 'out of the fish's belly' and 'And the Lord spake unto the fish.'

The first clause of the verse recalls Pss. xviii. 6, 7, cxx. 1.

the belly of hell. Sheol is thought of as a person, like the Greek Hades; cf. Isa. v. 14, where Sheol has a mouth and a desire. The deliverance from Sheol echoes Ps. xxx. 3.

For thou didst cast me into the depth, in the heart of the seas, 3
And the flood was round about me;
All thy waves and thy billows passed over me.
And I said, I am cast out from before thine eyes; 4
Yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.
The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; 5
The deep was round about me;
The weeds were wrapped about my head.
I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; 6

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3. For thou didst. It is really 'And thou didst' with *vau* consecutive. It is not a continuation of verse 2; probably, as Wellhausen conjectures, a verse has fallen out, perhaps some such thought as, 'I sinned against thee, I deserved thy punishment, and thou didst cast me,' &c.

heart of the seas: a phrase borrowed from Ezek. xxvii. 4, 25.

the flood: *Nahar* is usually a river, and especially the Nile. But it refers to other waters too, e. g. Ps. xxiv. 2.

all thy waves, &c., is from Ps. xlii. 7.

4. This first clause is taken from Ps. xxxi. 22, with the exception of a ש for a ז, which turns 'I am cut off' into **I am cast out.**

Yet. Nowack suggests, unnecessarily, *eik* for *ek*, 'How shall I look again?' Unnecessarily, because there is 'a budding morrow in midnight,' and the believing soul in its darkest moment yet believes to see the salvation of the Lord.

5. The waters compassed me: cf. Ps. xviii. 4 and lxix. 1.

The deep is *Tehom*, the mythical deep referred to in Gen. i. 2.

The weeds. As the seaweed grows at the bottom of the sea, says Nowack, this shows how deep he was plunged. Does it? Is not seaweed often floating in the mid-depths and even on the surface of the sea? The suggestion is not of the depth but of entanglement and the consequent difficulty of rising to the surface again. Wellhausen rightly points out how inappropriate this would be to the condition inside the fish.

6. This beautiful verse is original; for its first clauses we have no exact parallel, and it makes us wish that the poet had more frequently trusted his genius. It is a Miltonic thought, that the drowning man was carried to the roots of the mountains in the

The earth with her bars *closed* upon me for ever:
Yet hast thou brought up my life from the pit, O
LORD my God.
7 When my soul fainted within me, I remembered
the LORD:
And my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy
temple.
8 They that regard lying vanities
9 Forsake their own mercy.
But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of
thanksgiving;
I will pay that which I have vowed.
Salvation is of the LORD.

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vast deep, and that there he was held down under the grill of the earth, like a prisoner thrust into the lowest dungeon.

closed **upon me:** rather, 'were behind me.'

hast thou brought up my life echoes Ps. xxx. 3.

the pit usually means the grave, and may be metaphorical; but it may be applied to the watery depths.

7. The first clause is from Ps. cxlii. 3 (marg.), cxliii. 4; the second from Ps. xviii. 6, and v. 7. The reference to the temple at Jerusalem is as impossible in the historic Jonah as it was to David before the temple was built. Ps. xviii. 6 and v. 7 obviously belong to the later period when Solomon had built the temple, and our prayer here obviously comes from a pious soul of the Southern Kingdom.

8. lying vanities: i. e. idols (Deut. xxxii. 21). The idea is in Ps. xxxi. 6. This would be rather inappropriate on Jonah's lips, when the heathen had just been saved through their piety.

their own mercy: a designation of Yahweh; so in Ps. cxliv. 2 he is called 'My lovingkindness' (the same word in the Hebrew). The whole verse is unsuitable to the situation of Jonah; but curiously apposite if we see in the fish a symbol of the Captivity, and in Jonah a symbol of Israel banished into exile, in order to learn to put aside idols for ever. Prof. G. A. Smith treats the episode as an allegory with this meaning.

9. the voice of thanksgiving: cf. Ps. xlii. 4. For the payment of the vow made in straits, to be fulfilled in deliverance, Ps. l. 14, 23.

'Salvation is Yahweh's' is the conclusion of the hymn.

And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out 10
Jonah upon the dry land.

And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the 3
second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great 2
city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.
So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to 3
the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding
great city, of three days' journey. And Jonah began to 4
enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said,
Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. And 5

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10. This verse follows verse 1.

the dry land: *sc.* the coast of Palestine from which the ship had started.

The parallel to the Lord's resurrection is deeper than the fact of a three days' entombment. Jonah saved the ship by voluntarily dying; so Christ laid down his life and took it again. Those he saved were not Jews only but Phoenicians, pagans, the world.

iii. **1. the second time.** Jonah has learnt obedience by suffering. The phrase of i. 2 is repeated. Then the command was rejected, now it is accepted in humility.

3. was. This past tense in the Hebrew implies that the writer is living at a time when Nineveh had ceased to be, i. e. after 606 B. C.

exceeding great: *lit.* 'great to God' (the name of Israel's God, Yahweh, is not here employed nor in iv. 7 following), i. e. great even in His judgement.

of three days' journey. It is clear from verse 4 that the writer understood the city to have been three days' journey in diameter. Orelli's idea that the journey was lengthened by zigzagging through the several markets will satisfy no one; for the phrase ceases then to designate the size altogether. But our author, writing long after the destruction of Nineveh, took the traditional description of the circuit of Nineveh, sixty miles, approximately three days' journey (Diodorus, ii. 3), to mean that it was sixty miles in diameter. But Diodorus, and Herodotus (v. 53) assure us that it was one day's journey across, twenty miles.

4. forty days: LXX has 'three days.' If we were reading a historical description the narrative would be full of difficulties. A strange prophet announced the impending destruction as he travelled through the vast city for one day, and the huge population immediately believed and repented. The king, who is not named, heard, and put on sackcloth, sitting in ashes. If this were

the people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them
6 even to the least of them. And the tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and
7 sat in ashes. And he made proclamation and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock,
8 taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: but

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history, Jonah did what no prophet, what no apostle, what Christ himself never did. Never did a day's preaching bring a vast strange city to repentance. But we repeat, this is not history, it is a story with a meaning, an allegory; it is the great announcement that God cares for the heathen world, and calls it to repentance, and that whenever men anywhere repent, His compassion is kindled towards them. Suppose the writer is writing history, and the narrative loses its spiritual power because it becomes incredible; recognize that he is clothing a great truth in a pictorial form, and the truth is carried straight home to heart and conscience, just because it is 'truth embodied in a tale.'

shall be overthrown. The ruins of Nineveh, discovered by Layard, are a world's wonder. Opposite Mosul on the right bank of the Tigris are two mounds, Kujundschik, and Nebi Yunus (i. e. Prophet Jonah). Between these, covering an area nine miles round, are the ruins of the city. 'Upon terraces and substructions of enormous breadth rose storied palaces, arsenals, barracks, libraries, and temples. The walls were so broad that chariots could roll abreast on them' (Prof. G. A. Smith). But the Nineveh which Jonah is supposed to have entered included leagues of buildings, adjoining cities, and walled country (Gen. x. 11) extending over an area sixty miles in circumference. Our author says nothing of the buildings and the glory of the city; he sees only the living things, the men and the cattle.

5. Orelli accounts for the wonder of the Ninevites understanding Jonah, by referring to Isa. xxxvi. 11. But in a story difficulties of this kind are ignored.

fast, and . . . sackcloth: cf. Joel i. 13.

6. robe: or 'mantle,' the same word as in Joshua vii. 21 (R.V. marg.), 'mantle of Shinar.'

sat in ashes: Job ii. 8.

7. For the Jewish notion of these absolute decrees of Eastern kings see Dan. iii. 10, 29.

let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast, and let them cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who knoweth whether God will not 9
turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that 10
they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he 4

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8. man and beast. If we are not to treat these words, with Wellhausen, as an insertion, we are to conceive the cattle put into mourning to show sympathy with men (cf. iv. 11). And this is in harmony with Oriental thought and practice; cf. Joel i. 18 for the sympathy of beasts with men, and Herod. ix. 24, where in the mourning for Masistius the people shore off not only their own hair but also that of the horses and other beasts of burden (cf. Virg. *Ecl.* v. 1; *Aen.* xi. 89). But when we read on, **let them cry mightily,** we see the force of Wellhausen's suggestion.

9. Who knoweth: from Joel ii. 14.

10. God saw. The use of Elohim for Yahweh would in an earlier writing indicate different sources. But when our book was written the names were used interchangeably. So in iv. 6, 'Yahweh Elohim.'

repented of the evil: as He did at Amos's prayer (Amos vii. 3), and at Moses' (Exod. xxxii. 14). But here the prophet does not intercede for the guilty; on the contrary, he is deeply aggrieved that God hears the cry of repentance.

It will be observed that verses 6–9 seem out of place. The people had put on sackcloth before the king commanded it, verse 6. The discrepancy is, however, only due to the fact that the author is creating the story and not recording facts.

iv. **1. it displeased Jonah:** the phrase of Neh. ii. 10, xiii. 8. Jonah's grief is not that of wounded *amour propre*, but a patriotic indignation that Israel's foes should be spared. To learn to rejoice in the pardon of one's enemies, and aliens, is to go further than the Old Testament, and to reach the New. Even Jeremiah exclaimed, 'Lord, Thou hast deceived me!' when his word was reversed by circumstances. The Book of Jonah has anticipated the days of the Son of Man when it condemns Jonah for this limited religion of patriotism and demands that he should rejoice in the pardon and salvation of any men.

2 was angry. And he prayed unto the Lord, and said,
I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was
yet in my country? Therefore I hasted to flee unto
Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and
full of compassion, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy,
3 and repentest thee of the evil. Therefore now, O Lord,
take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for
4 me to die than to live. And the Lord said, Doest thou
5 well to be angry? Then Jonah went out of the city, and
sat on the east side of the city, and there made him
a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see
6 what would become of the city. And the Lord God
prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah,
that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him

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2. hasted to flee: it is a Hebrew idiom, 'I was before to flee.' Nowack says it only means here, 'I fled before to Tarshish.'

a gracious God: this is from Joel ii. 13.

3. This prayer for death brings the Midrash of Jonah into close connexion with the similar Midrash of Elijah (1 Kings xix. 4), and reminds us that they belong to the same circle of literature.

better for me to die: Gen. xxvii. 46.

4. Doest thou well: rather, the Heb. use of *heiteb* is adverbial, strengthening the verbal idea, as in Deut. ix. 21, xiii. 15. 'Art thou very angry?' It is a gentle bantering, a rallying of a sulky mind, as Prof. G. A. Smith says.

5. Jonah withdraws indignant to watch from the side of the sunrise what he still hopes may be the fulfilment of his fell denunciation. The 'booth' might well be, as at the Feast of Booths, so loose an arbour of leaves and boughs that it would not screen him from the vertical sun.

6. *The miracle of the Gourd.* Jonah is to learn by his regret for the withering of a useful plant how much more his compassion should be kindled for conscious beings, even children and cattle.

the LORD God: from Gen. ii. 4.

prepared: i. 17, also iv. 7, 8; a late word.

gourd: *kikor*; LXX, *colycuthé*. It is the *Ricinus* (Jerome), a shrub common in Palestine, which grows with extraordinary rapidity in a sandy soil. Its broad leaves give a good shelter. The name used here, and in Greek, *kiki* (Herod. ii. 94; Plin. xv. 7) was from Egypt. The familiar name is *Palma Christi*.

from his evil case. So Jonah was exceeding glad because
of the gourd. But God prepared a worm when the 7
morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd, that
it withered. And it came to pass, when the sun arose, 8
that God prepared a sultry east wind; and the sun beat
upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and requested
for himself that he might die, and said, It is better for
me to die than to live. And God said to Jonah, Doest 9
thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do
well to be angry even unto death. And the LORD said, 10
Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast

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to deliver him from his evil case: probably a gloss. For it is not mentioned that he was suffering from the heat until later on, verse 8. His evil case was the frustration of his prophecy. It would be too great a refinement to say that the gourd delivered him from his evil case by opening his eyes and touching his heart with pity for living things: yet that would be the only meaning which would justify the words here. Wellhausen remarks that the sitting under the gourd is perhaps an imitation of Elijah in his discouragement under the juniper.

7. The sudden withering is, of course, miraculous as the sudden growth, though the *Ricinus* in any case grows quickly, and a blight may as quickly destroy it.

8. sultry. The Hebrew word here is unknown. 'I know not how to expound or to emend it,' says Wellhausen. On the other hand, as Nowack says, its meaning is clear, 'glowing hot.'

east wind: the Sherghi, Sherki, or Scirocco.

beat upon: the construction is not found elsewhere in the Hebrew; 'smite' is enough without 'upon.' Ps. cxxi. 6; Isa. xlix. 10.

fainted: the same as Amos viii. 13.

requested: this is imitated from 1 Kings xix. 4.

9. 'Art thou so very angry about the gourd?' see verse 4.

even unto death: it recalls Gethsemane, Matt. xxvi. 38.

10. had pity on the gourd: as if Jonah had felt a sentimental regret in the sudden decay of the useful plant. This also shows the rather free movement of thought in the story-maker. Jonah was only very angry, apparently, because he lost the grateful shade. But the argument is very fine: 'So moved about a gourd which came, the son of a night'—that is the literal Hebrew—'and perished, the son of a night, with the making of which you had

not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in
11 a night, and perished in a night: and should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city; wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

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no concern; and shall not God have pity on these creatures made in His image, into which He breathed His breath—flowers of His heart are they?' The story, as a story, may halt, but the spiritual lesson never falters.

11. sixscore thousand: 120,000 persons who cannot tell right hand from left, that would mean children under two years old. As such commonly form but one-tenth of a population, we suppose Nineveh to contain 1,200,000 people. The cattle also are the Lord's, and He cares for them.

This sudden conclusion of the book is very impressive. We hear no more of Jonah or of the tale, which have served the purpose as the vehicle of the truth. We are left with the great thought that God pities and God cares for the vast populations of all heathen cities, and even for the dumb creatures which serve them. Again Jonah anticipates Christ; cf. Matt. vi. 10–34. The author of a little book called *From the Abyss* has summoned this passage to give us hope for the vast, obscure, shifting, meaningless, purposeless sea of humanity that floods a modern city, like London. The only comfort is, God knows and cares for each. It is an illustration of the vital power of the Word of God that this little book avails in this late and terrible situation.

MICAH

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

MICAH

INTRODUCTION

SINCE criticism began, with Ewald, to question the unity of this little book, it has raged with increasing violence, until Prof. Cheyne, improving on Robertson Smith in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* concludes: 'in no part of ch. iv–vii can we venture to detect the hand of Micah.'

It is true that the value of the book does not depend on the authorship of Micah. If it had originally been attributed to several prophets at different periods its teaching would have been equally drastic and conclusive. But something is due to tradition; we are certainly justified in retaining the integrity of a book of Scripture, unless conclusive reasons can be advanced against it. And those who have recently written the fullest monographs on the subject, Wildeboer, Von Ryssel, and Elhorst, incline, as Prof. G. A. Smith says, to believe in the genuineness of the book as a whole.

We shall do well, therefore, to assume that these very diverse utterances were delivered by Micah the Morashtite within the dates assigned by i. 1, viz. 740–700 B.C., except where clauses or passages are conclusively shown to come from a later date or from another hand.

Micah overlaps Hosea, as Hosea overlaps Amos, and he is a contemporary of Isaiah, though he began later and ended earlier than the great prophet of the court and the capital[1]. His was a voice from the country-side. Moresheth was a small town in the maritime plain, near Gath (i. 14).

To begin with, chs. i–iii, with the exception of ii. 12, 13, form the undisputed work of this country-prophet (see Jer. xxvi. 17–19, where the prophet quotes his predecessor). Here is the veritable Micah; and criticism has to decide whether chs. iv–vii can be ascribed to the writer of this indisputable section. Let us analyse the three chapters. i. 2–4 is a picture of the Theophany. Yahweh comes down to judge Israel and Judah; i. 5–8, Samaria is destroyed, but the judgement (i. 9) reaches even to Judah and Jerusalem; i. 10–16 describes the march of the foe, the Assyrian, especially through the Shephelah and the towns in the neighbourhood of Moresheth-gath, which Micah had known from his boyhood. This dwelling on the local effects of the invasion, a little out of proportion with the rest, gives peculiar vividness and reality to the countryman's view of things: to him Jerusalem was a distant, and almost alien, centre of fashion, luxury, vice, and oppression.

ii. 1–11 describes the powerful and wealthy people whose misdeeds bring this judgement upon the nation. They will not listen to threats of judgement, secure in the privileges of the chosen people. Whoso rebukes their vices they reject. The only prophet they will listen to is the brewer and the distiller (verse 11).

ii. 12–13 is an insertion of a promise of a grand

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[1] How conscious of his contemporary Micah was, the following comparisons show:—

MICAH.	ISAIAH.	MICAH.	ISAIAH.
i. 9–16.	x. 28–32.	iv. 4 end.	i. 20 end.
ii. 1–2.	v. 8.	iv. 10.	xxxii. 11.
ii. 6–11.	xxviii. 10;	v. 2–4.	vii. 14.
	xxx. 10, 11.	v. 5.	ix. 6.
ii. 11.	xxviii. 7.	v. 9–14.	ii. 6–17.
ii. 12 and iv. 7.	x. 20–23.	vi. 6–8.	i. 11–17.
iii. 5–7.	xxix. 9–12.	vii. 7.	viii. 17.
iii. 12.	xxxii. 14.	vii. 12.	xi. 11.

restoration, when Yahweh will lead back His captives. Prof. Driver thinks this may be an oracle of Micah's, but inserted in the wrong place. Other commentators assume it to be an insertion of the exilic period.

iii. 1–12 Micah addresses the leaders of Judah—note, the Northern Kingdom is now destroyed, and the general term Jacob, or Israel, applies to Judah, cf. verses 1 and 10—and he shows them the conduct which must entail the destruction of Zion.

Looking at this first section of the book, we may date it approximately between 725 B.C., when Shalmaneser began the siege of Samaria, and the year or two which followed its destruction by Sargon in 721 B.C. When Sargon marched on through the Shephelah to his victory at Raphia in 719 B.C. it may be that Micah broke silence, just as the great Assyrian army was clattering past Moresheth, fresh from the ruin of Samaria. It is, however, possible that chs. ii, iii were composed a few years later, between 719 and 701 B.C., the year when Sennacherib was driven back from Jerusalem.

In any case the motive of the whole prophecy is the iniquity of Israel which brought the Assyrian to Samaria, and the social corruption in Jerusalem, following the prosperous years of Amaziah, 2 Kings xiv. 7–22, which was bringing the same dreaded enemy to punish the Southern Kingdom.

Now we turn to chs. iv, v. The whole tone changes: we are in an atmosphere of eschatological hopes. We see, iv. 1–5, the last days when all nations will worship Yahweh, and universal peace will prevail. In iv. 6–8 the Exile is assumed, and the restoration is promised. In iv. 9–10 we see the ruin of Jerusalem and the Exile in Babylon, but the assured deliverance; to this also belongs v. 1. iv. 11–13, quite another picture of Jerusalem besieged, completely victorious over her foes. v. 2–15 presents a grand apocalyptic picture. A ruler arises out of Beth-lehem Ephrathah, and marshals the flock of Israel.

Now there are sufficient leaders to resist the Assyrian, and even to destroy him. The remnant of Jacob becomes a dew to the thirsty nations, a majestic lion marching to victory. Then all signs of war and of superstitious worship will be destroyed, and the nations which will not yield to the Divine ruler will be cut off.

The complete change of tone in these loosely connected visions of restoration and victory has driven the commentators, from Stade to Cheyne, to attribute them to another author and a later age. But, after the deliverance of Hezekiah from Sennacherib in 701 B.C. and the suppression of the guilty ruling class, especially if we remember Isaiah's confident predictions that Zion should be saved, and a Deliverer should come, *God-with-us*, it is quite probable that Micah received these more hopeful visions. As Prof. G. A. Smith says, iv. 6, 7 may refer to the Northern Israelites now in exile. Or if it refers to the Southern Kingdom and the Exile which was to be a century later, we have no right to deny the possibility of a prophet dipping into the future. The more particular 'and shalt come even unto Babylon' (verse 10) may be a later insertion, *ex eventu*, and for that reason it is no decisive evidence against attributing the passage to Micah. The signs of Yahweh's rule in ch. v may all be paralleled in Hosea and in Isaiah, with the exception of the abolition of the Mazzeboth and Asherim ('pillars,' verse 13). But considering Hezekiah's energy in removing those seductive symbols (2 Chron. xxxi. 1), a prophet in his time might easily include their destruction in a description of a re-established Kingdom of God. Then the description of the ruler from Beth-lehem reminds one of Isaiah's description of the Virgin's child. As contemporaries, and yet as independent prophets, they would naturally express the same expectation in different forms. And, as Pusey says, the fulfilment of the Messianic forecasts brings the two together: 'Ere Jesus was born the angel announced the birth of the Virgin's Son, *God-with-us*, in the words of Isaiah. When he was born he was pointed out as the object of worship to the first converts from the heathen on the authority of God through Micah.'

There is then no sufficient reason to deny Micah's authorship of these chapters or to limit his share in them, with Nowack, to iv. 9, 10^{a}, v. 1, and v. 9–13, unless it can be shown that the prophets never predicted the future, or never had mingled visions of exile and restoration, of punishment and Messianic glory. The argument against the chapters is purely *a priori*[1]; for it would be absurd to say that Micah could not have written, in the course of many years' ministry, a passage so different in tone and style as this is from chs. i–iii. The acknowledged Micah is too brief and particular to furnish a criterion for showing that he could not, at a different time, have written in a different vein.

Now turn to ch. vi. Here is another change of style and subject. vi. 1–8 is a noble dialogue between Yahweh and His people, who are seeking by cruel and heathen practices to propitiate Him; the grandest ethical utterance of the O. T. declares that what Yahweh really demands is justice, mercy, and humility. On the strength of verse 7 Ewald and his followers brought the passage to the days of Manasseh, when, as 2 Kings xxi shows, human sacrifices were practised. But Micah may have lived into the days of Manasseh; and, if he did not, in view of the common Semitic practice, there is nothing extraordinary in his having raised the supposition, verse 7, before the heathen practice was received widely in Israel. 2 Chron. xxviii. 3 assigns the practice to the time of Ahaz. At the same time, Nowack, and even Prof. Driver, think the probability is that the prophecy is from an anonymous prophet. Perhaps it was inserted in the Book of Micah because of the 'hear ye' with which it begins; cf. Mic. i. 2. I prefer to follow Prof. G. A. Smith, and to say that the passage contains nothing strange to the eighth century or to Micah. vi. 9–16 is a charge of iniquity in trade and life, which reminds one forcibly of Amos, and no decisive argument can be adduced against Micah's authorship.

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[1] Nowack decides that iv. 1–4 (Isa. ii. 2–4) cannot be pre-exilic, but his only argument is that it resembles Isa. xl–lxvi and has no parallel in the other prophets of the Assyrian period. This is arbitrary, and ignores the work of the Spirit in a prophet's mind. On the same subjective grounds he dismisses the bulk of chs. iv, v.

Ch. vii contains in verses 1–6 a cry of Zion over the destruction of her children, even her pious ones. Granted that it reminds one of Malachi, yet there is no line in it which might not have come from Micah or from any prophet who watches with sad eyes the iniquity of his time.

vii. 7–20 shows the punishment fallen on Zion, and Zion's recognition that it is the reward of its sins. Out of this springs the hope of restoration, verses 7–10. The prophet promises that Zion's walls shall be rebuilt and the heathen punished for their sins, verses 11–13. Then follows a prayer that Yahweh will restore His people to Gilead and Bashan, and humble the heathen in the dust, verses 14–17, and the book ends with a Psalm of praise for the mercy of Yahweh, verses 18–20.

Here it must be granted that verse 11 seems to belong to a time after the return from Exile. It reminds us of Lamentations; and the passage bears an affinity to Isaiah xl–lxvi. Nowack peremptorily decides that it cannot be Micah's. Wellhausen declares, 'between verses 6 and 7 yawns a century.' But, as Prof. G. A. Smith says, the curious limitation of the reference to Bashan and Gilead might suggest the time of Micah when the Northern Kingdom had recently fallen and those districts had been desolated by the Assyrian, though another explanation seems more natural. It is easier to regard verse 11 as an exilic insertion than to show that the passage as a whole is not Micah's. 'It is not clear,' as Prof. Driver says, 'that the expressions here, which seem to imply that a state of exile is in the

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BETHEL

prophet's mind, are more than parts of the imaginative picture drawn by him of the calamity which he sees to be impending' (*Introd. O. T.* p. 313).

Now to turn from the book to the man. He is the prophet of the people; his whole soul goes out to the oppressed, and he identifies religion with mercy. He is, like Amos, a great social reformer, for he links the idea of God with the cause of the people. Isaiah moved in the court circles and in high politics. Micah moved among the people; and his only concern with the movement of the nations was to show that the Assyrian came down upon Israel as a penalty because the rich and the powerful oppressed the weak and the poor.

Dr. Duff, in his *Old Testament Theology* (i. 307), gives a fine description of the man and his message, and the nature of his inspiration. A brief quotation may suffice, and set us on the study of the book with zest: 'Brave too the prophet was, and that in moments of real danger. No fancied sketch of an attack is that in ch. ii. When he protected the fugitives the thieving Gittites turned on him with gnashing wolves' teeth. It is far too realistic and too probable to be a fiction; such blows as he brings down in ch. iii on princes, prophets, traders, must have been resented. We feel this before we turn to Jeremiah's book (xxvi. 17–19), and read how they seized this Micah to destroy him in their rage. The story of his fearlessness, his danger, and deliverance lived on for a hundred years, a beacon-light to check the vicious and to cheer the brave: . . . this bravery sprang from real spiritual insight and vision of the Invisible.'

It was this genuine ethical sympathy with the poor which made him a suitable delineator of the essentials of religion (vi. 8) and of the promised Deliverer (v. 2–4). If these passages were not from Micah, they were from one like him.

Chronology

B.C.	
727.	Accession of Shalmaneser.
721.	Accession of Sargon and capture of Samaria.
720.	Accession of Hezekiah.
711.	Sargon's invasion of Judah, which we learn from the Cuneiform Inscriptions, to punish Hezekiah for joining with Ashdod in rebelling against him. (Perhaps 'Sargon' should be read for 'Sennacherib' in 2 Kings xviii. 13; Isa. xxxvi. 1.)
705.	Accession of Sennacherib.
701.	His invasion of Judah.
692.	Accession of Manasseh.

MICAH

THE word of the LORD that came to Micah the 1
Morashtite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah,
kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and
Jerusalem.

Hear, ye peoples, all of you; hearken, O earth, and 2

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i. **1. Micah** is the same as Micaiah (1 Kings xxii. 28), and means 'Who is like Yahweh?' Josephus calls both our prophet and Micaiah-ben-Imlah, Μιχαίας. It was a common name in Israel; cf. the Levite in Judges xvii.

Morashtite: i. e. 'Micah of Moresheth-gath' (verse 14). Moresheth ('a village east of Eleutheropolis,' Jerome) was a place in the Shephelah, or range of low hills which lie between the hill-country of Judah and the Philistine plain. It was seventeen miles west of Tekoa, where Amos was born, and looked westward over a fruitful land, as Tekoa looked eastward over a wilderness. Upon one of the western terraces, nearly a thousand feet above the sea, it commanded the undulating plain in which were Lachish, Eglon, Shaphir, &c., and where ran the great road, so often traversed by Egyptian or Assyrian armies, between Asia and Africa. Behind it, among the round hills of Judah, was Adullam, David's hold, and the field where he fought Goliath; and further east was the high ridge with its defiles leading down to Beth-lehem and Hebron. The valley-mouth near which it stood was the south-western gateway of Judaea.

in the days of Jotham, &c. (approximately from 739 to 692 B.C.). There is nothing in our book which carries us back to the earliest reign. But Ahaz was on the Southern throne when Samaria fell in 721, and Hezekiah succeeded him in 720 B. C.

which he saw: the physical figure for an inward perception of facts through the influence of the Divine Spirit. Hence the prophetic truth is often called a vision (Isa. i. 1; Obad. 1; Nahum i. 1).

Samaria and Jerusalem. This prophet has an equal concern for both the kingdoms: the one that was now crashing down in ruin, the other which was by its sins courting the same disaster.

i. 2-8. *The threat of punishment, fulfilled in* 721 *when Sargon took Samaria, and in* 711 *when he invaded Judah.*

2. Hear, ye peoples. Note how this has been imported into the

all that therein is: and let the Lord GOD be witness
3 against you, the Lord from his holy temple. For,
behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will
come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth.
4 And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the
valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, as waters
5 that are poured down a steep place. For the trans-
gression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house
of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not
Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are
6 they not Jerusalem? Therefore I will make Samaria as

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speech of the other Micah (ben-Imlah), 1 Kings xxii. 28. The 'peoples' cannot be the tribes of Israel, unless **earth** is to be rendered 'land'; cf. Jer. i. 5, who is a prophet unto the nations. Though Micah is thinking of Judah, he feels that the word of Yahweh applies to all nations, which are on moral grounds akin, and thus Yahweh will be witness against them all in due time.

all of you: *lit.* 'all of them.'

the Lord GOD should be 'the Lord Yahweh.'

his holy temple: *sc.* His heavenly dwelling-place (cf. Isa. xviii. 4), as verse 3 shows. Ps. xi. 4; Isa. lxiii. 15; Hab. ii. 20; Zech. ii. 13.

4. The image is that of a storm, as in Ps. xviii. Under the foot of Yahweh coming to judgement the hills melt like wax, and valleys are cloven asunder as if they were a sheet of falling water which is parted by every jutting rock. (Cf. Judges v. 5; Ps. lxviii. 2; Isa. lxiv. 1; Hab. iii. 6.)

5. all this: viz. the Theophany.

house of Israel (Amos vi. 13): Wellhausen wishes to alter it into the 'house of Judah,' to suit the parallel clause.

What is the transgression? (the stronger word 'apostasy' would be nearer the Hebrew): rather, 'Who is the transgression?' The sinner is indicated, the sin incarnate; Samaria is personified.

high places: *bamôth.* It was natural to think of these high places which were the constant occasions of sin (2 Chron. xxviii. 25, of Ahaz). But the Syr., LXX, and Targ. read *chattath*, i. e. 'the sin of Judah.' To the prophet in the country, as to many similarly placed to-day, the capital figures itself as a sink of iniquity. The imagination is more frequently used to embody the vices than the virtues of mankind.

an heap of the field, *and* as the plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof. And all 7
her graven images shall be beaten to pieces, and all her hires shall be burned with fire, and all her idols will I lay desolate: for of the hire of an harlot hath she gathered them, and unto the hire of an harlot shall they return. For this will I wail and howl, I will go stripped 8

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6. an heap of the field: rather, 'into a heap,' i. e. ruinous heaps in the field—a perfect picture of desolation. Pusey quotes Porter: 'The stones of the temples and palaces of Samaria have been carefully removed from the rich soil, thrown together in heaps, built up in the rude walk of terraces, and rolled down into the valley below.' So iii. 12; Ps. lxxix. 1; Jer. xxvi. 18. The blindness of criticism is illustrated by Wellhausen's odd remark here: 'There is the wildness of the field, herb, flowers, trees, stones of the field, but no ruins of the field.' He therefore changes the text in order to get 'forest,' cf. Ezek. xx. 46; it is a salutary warning that we cannot follow blindly even the wisest critic.

plantings of a vineyard: rather, 'into the plantings.' The hill of Samaria is fruitful, and when the city is a ruin the vines grow on the old site. John Hyrcanus fulfilled the forecast in the last clause of the verse (Joseph. *Antiq.* xiii. 10. 3).

7. With the ruin of the city goes the ruin of her powerless idolatries (so Isa. ii. 20, xxx. 22, xxxi. 7).

her hires: i. e. as the latter clause of the verse explains, the offerings of the idol shrines are regarded as the rewards of prostitution. Wellhausen thinks that another word for **images** is required here, and suggests 'her Asherim' (v. 14). This is not to interpret, but to rewrite, Micah.

hire of an harlot: Hos. ii. 7; Joel iii. 3. The wealth gained by these unclean religious practices of the temple-slaves (Deut. xxiii. 17, 18), seized by the Assyrian, will be returned to heathen temples in another land by methods as unclean.

hath she gathered them: Targ., Peshit. and Vulg. read better, 'they were gathered.'

i. 8–16. *Micah's Lamentation.*

8. Now the prophet utters his lament, in a spirit like Jeremiah's. His sorrow is primarily because this calamity is coming also to his own people and to Jerusalem; but he has tears also for Samaria.

and naked: I will make a wailing like the jackals, and
9 a mourning like the ostriches. For her wounds are
incurable: for it is come even unto Judah; it reacheth
10 unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem. Tell it

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stripped. As the word occurs only with verbs of motion, it must mean 'barefooted,' a sign of mourning, 2 Sam. xv. 30; Isa. xx. 2.

naked: i. e. with only the undergarment or *chiton* on, Job xxii. 6.

jackals howl, Job xxx. 29.

ostriches: *lit.* 'daughters of the desert.' The Arabs call the ostrich still *abu-sahara*, 'father of the desert.' The gruesome groans of these great birds are well known.

Cheyne beautifully says: 'The prophets did not cease to be men when they received the gift of inspiration. Sometimes they seem to have had a kind of double consciousness, uniting them on the one hand with the inspiring Spirit, and on the other with their much-loved people. Hence their abrupt transitions from stern denunciation to tender compassion.'

9. wounds. As 'incurable' is singular, and so is the verb following, we must read the noun in the singular: 'her stroke is desperate: it is come.' So the LXX and Syr. read.

incurable: Jer. xv. 18; in this case because it has reached the heart, Jerusalem.

unto the gate: Obad. 11, 13.

even to Jerusalem Wellhausen considers a gloss on the phrase **gate of my people.** Jerusalem is to the country what the gate is to the city—the scene of solemn meetings; Isa. xxxiii. 20. The prophet sees in vision the approach of Sennacherib to the capital, eighteen years before the event.

10–16 consist of a series of curious puns on the names of towns. We find the most likely interpretation of the passage in the idea that Micah is contemplating the Assyrian army which was to invade Judah in its passage through the towns which surrounded his own country home, Moresheth-gath. But the text is very obscure, and often defies assured interpretation.

Isa. x. 28 records the approach of the Assyrian to Jerusalem in a very different spirit. Micah was convinced that Jerusalem would be overthrown, as finally she was; Isaiah was sure that she would be delivered, as she was for the time. Prof. G. A. Smith finely says: 'Micah's elegy sweeps across the landscape so dear to him.' Sargon was marching past these towns and villages of the Shephelah to defeat Egypt at Raphia. The prophet from his lofty town watches the ominous march; and imagines that the host will come back by Lachish and Mareshah to march on Jerusalem from that side, as invaders usually did.

not in Gath, weep not at all: at Beth-le-Aphrah have I
rolled myself in the dust. Pass ye away, O inhabitant 11
of Shaphir, in nakedness and shame: the inhabitant of
Zaanan is not come forth; the wailing of Beth-ezel shall
take from you the stay thereof. For the inhabitant of 12
Maroth waiteth anxiously for good: because evil is
come down from the LORD unto the gate of Jerusalem.

This local patriotism, though it makes the allusions obscure, gives flesh and blood to the prophet. He is like Burns singing of Ayrshire, with Edinburgh in the far distance; but with how different a note from Burns'!

10. Prof. G. A. Smith tries to keep the paranomasia thus: 'Tell it not in Tell-town; weep not in Weep-town; in House of Dust, roll thyself in dust.'

Gath: the Eleutheropolis or Beit-Jibrin of Jerome was near to Moresheth. The phrase recalls 2 Sam. i. 20. Pusey thinks the phrase 'Tell it not in Gath' was already a proverb, as it is with us. But this is hardly likely in this connexion, with other towns in the neighbourhood similarly apostrophized. Gath was destroyed by Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 6, but it still was a symbol of the hostile Philistines, and the prophet cries, '*Begath al taggidu.*'

weep not: it is '*Bako al tibku*,' 'weep not in Acco.' Was it the town in the north from which the Canaanites were never expelled (Judges i. 31)? Wellhausen makes it 'Weep, weep, in Bochim' (LXX recension, ἐν Βακειμ), Judges ii. 1–5.

Beth-le-Aphrah: south of Beit-Jibrin is now a wady, El-Ghufr, in which one can catch the echo of le-Aphrah. The pun is '*Bebeth le-aphrah aphar hithpalashi*,' 'in the House of the Dust have I sprinkled myself with dust' (2 Sam. xiii. 19), and the last word suggests Philistine.

11. Shaphir: i. e. 'Beauty-town.' This is identified with Suafir, four and a half miles south-east of Ashdod.

Zaanan: i. e. 'March-town' ('Zenan' of Joshua xv. 37?), 'the inhabitress of March-town shall not march forth'; 'inhabitress,' the virgin of the town (Isa. i. 8).

Beth-ezel: unknown. No pun here. Its wailing incapacitates it to render help.

12. Maroth is unknown: it means 'bitternesses,' i. e. perfect grief. There is no good news.

the gate of Jerusalem. Sennacherib speaks of this gate in his inscription (Taylor's cylinder, col. iii. ll. 22, 23), 'the exit of the great gate of his city I caused them to break through.' Though this was probably Sargon (as Isa. xxii. 7).

13 Bind the chariot to the swift steed, O inhabitant of
Lachish: she was the beginning of sin to the daughter
of Zion; for the transgressions of Israel were found in
14 thee. Therefore shalt thou give a parting gift to
Moresheth-gath: the houses of Achzib shall be a deceit-
15 ful thing unto the kings of Israel. I will yet bring unto
thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah, him that shall possess

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13. Lachish. The play on words is made by the fact that **to the swift steed** is the same as 'Lachish,' with the addition of one letter and the omission of another. Lachish is summoned to battle, to resist the invader. In what way this ancient city was the beginning of sin to Israel, and the city of the Theocracy, we cannot tell. But the tablets of Tel-el-Amarna, and the layers of ruins found at Tell-el-Hesy, the site of ancient Lachish, assure us that the city was fortified and important ages before the Israelites entered Canaan. Hitzig conjectured that the horses of the sun (2 Kings xxiii. 11) were borrowed from this stronghold of idolatry. Prof. G. A. Smith gives a more probable explanation. Lachish was on the border of Egypt. In the Tel-el-Amarna letters it was under an Egyptian governor, Timrida. The sin of Israel at this time was its tendency to lean on Egypt and to accept subsidies of horses and chariots from that country. This sin might be conceived as being learnt from Lachish, which geographically leaned on Egypt, Lachish, the very name of which suggests the chariot-horse. Lachish was taken by Sennacherib, as he records in his bas-reliefs (cf. Isa. xxxvi. 2, xxxvii. 8). Israel stands for the Southern Kingdom here, as was natural now that the Northern Kingdom (more specifically Israel) had fallen.

beginning of sin to . . . What a world of evil lies in the three words! (Pusey).

14. Moresheth, with one letter changed, would mean 'the beloved' (Deut. xxii. 23); and that seems to be the point of the play on words. This was Micah's own beloved town. The gift referred to is the bridal dower (1 Kings ix. 16). The parting gift to the town implies that it is going far away from home into captivity!

Achzib (Joshua xv. 44), perhaps Ain-Kezbeh, eight miles north-north-east of Beit-Jibrin. As the margin shows, the pun is, 'Achzib shall be Achzab' (a winter brook, that fails in the heat, Jer. xv. 18) to the kings of Israel (*sc.* Judah), affording no real defence or check to the invader.

15. Mareshah (Joshua xv. 44). The name still is found in a ruin one mile south of Beit-Jibrin. The Hebrew word

thee: the glory of Israel shall come even unto Adullam.
Make thee bald, and poll thee for the children of thy 16
delight: enlarge thy baldness as the eagle; for they are
gone into captivity from thee.

Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon 2
their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it,

'possessor' is from the same root as Mareshah. The possessor in this case was Sargon.

Adullam: six miles north-east of Beit-Jibrin. The glory of Israel shall come, perhaps as a fugitive. Micah's thought may have been of the great king David once hiding in Adullam. The caves near Adullam could shelter an army. The outer chamber of one of these vast caverns is 270 feet by 126; galleries lead into minor chambers. They have been excavated and built and lighted for human habitation (Pusey). Now the dying kingdom will be reduced to the band of outlaws out of which it sprang. But the phrase is very obscure.

16. Make thee bald. Judah is addressed. The mother is to mourn for her lost children, by the method common in ancient Israel (Isa. iii. 24, xxii. 12; Jer. xvi. 6, xli. 5; Amos viii. 10), but forbidden in the Deuteronomic Law (Deut. xiv. 1). The children may be the towns of Judah, or the inhabitants of Jerusalem; both are going into captivity.

eagle: *nesher* is the Gier-eagle (*vultur percnopterus*), which is bald on the top of its head, with slight covering behind, found in Egypt and Palestine. If the common eagle were meant, we should have to think of the spring moulting in which the bird is greatly weakened: but then it is not the head alone that moults.

ii. 1–11. The social sins which had incurred the punishment predicted in ch. i. Micah says to Judah what Amos had said to Israel. With the spirit of Langland, he sees things from the country-side, and charges the landowners with robbing the poor. That, and not idolatry or wrong foreign-policy, is the crying evil to the countryman. Both Isaiah and Micah are needed; but Micah's recognition that social oppression is the cardinal sin gives him a burning message to our own day. It is unfortunate that these eleven verses are so imperfectly preserved, but the fiery spirit burning in them is unmistakable.

1, 2. The ways of the great.

upon their beds, where honest toilers sleep, and good men meditate on God, Ps. lxiii. 6, or at least are still, Ps. iv. 4, these avaricious landlords form plans to increase their wealth at the

2 because it is in the power of their hand. And they
covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them
away: and they oppress a man and his house, even
3 a man and his heritage. Therefore thus saith the
Lord: Behold, against this family do I devise an evil,
from which ye shall not remove your necks, neither shall
4 ye walk haughtily; for it is an evil time. In that day

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expense of the people, and even work out their plans in thought. Wellhausen would strike out **work evil,** not seeing the appropriateness of the description of going over the plans of iniquity in the wakeful hours. They rise early, as good men would for prayer, to carry out their rapacious designs as far as their power goes.

in the power of their hand. Gen. xxxi. 29; Deut. xxviii. 32; Neh. v. 5; Prov. iii. 27.

covet fields. The law against coveting (Exod. xx. 17) Cheyne calls the deepest of all the Ten Commandments. Here Isaiah (v. 8) and Micah echo each other: cf. Hos. v. 10.

houses: Exod. xx. 17; Deut. v. 21; 1 Kings xxi.

take them away refers rather to the owners than to the houses, for the Hebrew is 'lift them up.'

a man. Prof. G. A. Smith translates *geber* 'a good man.' This ruin of man and homestead is the familiar scene of all times, where wealth forgets its duties and private property in land obliterates the sleeping partnership which in the case of land must always be conceded to every member of the community. Lev. xxvi. 34; Job xxxi. 38; Hab. ii. 9-11 show how the land is punished for the sins of its lords. It should be remembered that the system of land tenure in Israel was like that of the village community described by Sir Henry Maine in his *Ancient Law*; the property was inalienable, and even if purchased it reverted to the clan at the end of fifty years (Lev. xxv. 8-17; Num. xxvii. 1-11, xxxiii. 54; 1 Kings xxi. 4).

3-5. The punishment which shall fall on these powerful and respectable thieves. While they devise evil, Yahweh is devising evil for them. It is a yoke, *sc.* of captivity (cf. Hos. x. 11) which will weigh them down, and they cannot shake it off their necks.

this family: i. e. Israel. Jer. viii. 3; Amos iii. 1 explain the term.

walk haughtily: rather, 'upright'; under the yoke of exile the necks of the Israelites will be bent like those of oxen; but the idea of pride is included: cf. Isa. ii. 11.

shall they take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, *and* say, We be utterly spoiled: he changeth the portion of my people: how doth he remove *it* from me! to the rebellious he divideth our fields. Therefore thou shalt have none 5 that shall cast the line by lot in the congregation of the

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an evil time: not perhaps ethically (Amos v. 13), but in a physical sense.

take up a parable: *lit.* 'a similitude,' but used to express an utterance characterized by parallelism of any kind. Here it is the wail over the dead, like Amos v. 16. The professional mourners come and wail for the ruined people, speaking as it were in their stead. Stade, with Nowack's approval, rewrites the verse to make a proper poetical strophe:—

'The possession of my people is measured out with the rod,
There is none to restore it;
To those who led us away captive our fields are divided,
We are utterly spoiled.'

Wellhausen strikes out the word which is rendered **lamentation.** But it may be rendered, as in the margin, 'It is done.' It has been suggested that 'It is done,' like the Latin '*Fuit*,' was the beginning of a familiar dirge. But it is better to take the Hebrew words *nehah nehi nehjah* as it were 'woe, woe, woe,' in the way the Revisers have done. The words of the dirge are simple and intelligible, though the different readings of the LXX suggest that the text is disturbed. For **changeth** LXX reads 'is measured off.' For **how doth he remove** LXX reads 'there was none to hinder him.'

divideth our fields. Once in the settlement of the land Yahweh divided the fields to His people, Num. xxvi. 53, 55; Joshua xiii. 7, xiv. 5, xviii. 2, 5, 10, xix. 51, and Ezekiel prophesied such a division in the restoration (xlvii. 21). But Micah describes the division of the lands among the rebellious, viz. the heathen conquerors. It is striking to find this prophet, and Isaiah (x. 5–15, xxxvii. 26), speaking of the heathen as rebellious. They felt as Paul did (Rom. i. 20), that even the heathen had a certain natural light, and their sins are rebellion against God.

cast the line by lot: or perhaps better, 'cast the measuring-line upon a lot,' as in the happy days of early conquest when Joshua appointed the lots of the several tribes (Joshua xv. 1, xvi. 1, xvii. 1: cf. Judges i. 3). The line is, of course, the measuring-line used in the demarcation of the allotments.

6 LORD. Prophesy ye not, *thus* they prophesy. They shall not prophesy to these: reproaches shall not depart.
7 Shall it be said, O house of Jacob, Is the spirit of the LORD straitened? are these his doings? Do not my
8 words do good to him that walketh uprightly? But of late my people is risen up as an enemy: ye strip the

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6, 7. In these two verses we have evidently the protests of the wealthy and powerful persons whom the prophet has been denouncing. To suppose with some commentators that 'false prophets' is the subject here tends to confusion rather than light. Unfortunately the language is obscure.

Prophesy ye not. The text is corrupt, says Wellhausen. For there is no disparagement in the word *hattiph*, which, meaning literally to 'drop,' is constantly used for the utterance of a prophetic message, e.g. Ezek. xxi. 2; Amos vii. 16. And the word for **depart** is in the singular, with a plural noun. Things are a bit clearer if we may, with the Peshitto, bring over 'in the congregation of the Lord' from verse 5 to verse 6.

to these: rather, as in marg., 'of these things.' It is the object of the verb, and refers to what is said in verses 3-5. With Nowack we may alter **reproaches** into the singular by a difference of a vowel point, and may read the clause as a question. Thus we get—and it is the most satisfactory rendering possible in the condition of the text:—'In the congregation of the Lord, "Prophesy not," they prophesy, "let them not prophesy of these things. Shall reproach not cease?"' That is, these self-satisfied men, as if prophesying themselves, bid Micah and the true prophets to be silent, and reproach them with urging such reproaches against the people of God. Thus there is a parallel with Isa. xxx. 9, 10, and with Amos ii. 12, v. 10. The later persecution of prophets was preceded by this kind of grumbling and self-righteous protest. They go on in a tone of affected piety: **Shall it be said, O house of Jacob, Is the spirit of the LORD straitened?** (i.e. ceased to be longsuffering, Exod. xxxiv. 6) **are these** (viz. the calamities denounced in verses 4, 5) **his doings?** The remaining clause of the verse, unless we might, with Nowack and Prof. G. A. Smith, boldly change **my words** into 'his words,' belongs to the following verse, where Yahweh begins to speak.

The phrase **him that walketh uprightly** is in the Hebrew ungrammatical and impossible, but the sense may be considered certain.

8. The sudden change, first from the prophet's word in verses 1-5 to the protests of his hearers in 6, 7^a, and then to the utter-

robe from off the garment from them that pass by securely *as men* averse from war. The women of my 9
people ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their young children ye take away my glory for ever.
Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because 10

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ance of God (7^b to the end of the chapter), is very perplexing to the English reader. It reminds us of Hosea.

This oracle refers to an outrage recently committed. Some peaceful people on the high-road had been attacked, stripped, and robbed, and the women and children had been carried off from their homes. This lawless rapacity of the great is introduced with the question: 'Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? But the other day my people rose up as an enemy: ye strip,' &c. The main difficulty is that **my people** means the rapacious grandees in verse 8, and the victimized poor in verse 9. But, of course, both were nominally Yahweh's people. Wellhausen and others make extensive alterations of the text, but do not improve the meaning.

robe . . . garment. The robe is the *salmah* or upper garment, which was thrown over the tunic by day and used as a covering by night. But the meaning of the word translated 'garment' is only a guess, and the preposition translated **from off** is quite a solecism. Cheyne translates: 'ye pull the robe clean away from the garment.'

9. houses. Wellhausen changes the text, and gets 'the women of my people ye tear from their darling children.' But this entirely spoils the force of verse 10, where the oppressors are to be carried away into exile, precisely because they robbed their poor neighbours of their homes; cf. Isa. x. 2. It is a mercy that scholars have not the power to emend the text, or in a few generations the Bible would be completely rewritten.

my glory: viz. the privilege of belonging to the congregation of Yahweh, which is lost when the children are sold into a heathen land.

Prof. G. A. Smith gives an apposite quotation from Langland to show how, in the England of the fourteenth century, the rich robbed the poor as in the days of Micah. But he might have cited similar illustrations from the nineteenth century.

10. For these iniquities to the poor the rich are to be punished by the Exile; cf. Rev. xiii. 10.

this (*sc.* land) **is not your rest,** though it was once given for

of uncleanness that destroyeth, even with a grievous
11 destruction. If a man walking in wind and falsehood
do lie, *saying*, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of
strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.
12 I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will
surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them

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that purpose, Deut. xii. 9, 10 (cf. Isa. xxviii. 12). For the land being defiled by iniquity, see Lev. xviii. 25.

The emphatic repetition, 'uncleanness that bringeth destruction, destruction incurable,' is a flashlight on the connexion between sin and eternal death.

11. walking in wind and falsehood. The irony of this description of a false prophet is enhanced in the Hebrew, where the word *ruach* means both wind and Spirit. The prophet walking in 'the Spirit and falsehood' is the most terrible phenomenon of the religious life. In him the Spirit becomes merely wind.

I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink. The phrase has a meaning for modern states, in which the Drink interest not only dominates politics, but offers its sordid support to religion. The union of Beer and Bible is anticipated by Micah. A degraded nation rejects God's prophet and accepts that corrupt combination in its place. The modernness of the ancient prophets is due to the unchangeable character of sins, and the equally unchangeable character of God.

ii. 12, 13. These two verses are a complete change from what has just been said. They assume that the people are in exile; they promise to a remnant a return out of the distant prison-house, under the lead of the breaker.

It is conceivable that the prophet, while denouncing punishment (verse 4) and exile (verse 10), had a bright and sudden vision of the glad return which was afterwards to be. Michaelis and Ewald supposed that the verses were spoken by the false prophets; but that is equally revolting to the connexion and to our religious sense. Von Ryssel, Steiner, and others, agree that the words are Micah's, but consider them out of place, see iv. 6–8. Most modern commentators think the verses were written in the Exile, and interpolated here in the prophecies of Micah. The reasons given are entirely subjective. We may treat them as a ray of sunlight streaming for a moment through the cloudy and dark day of denunciation.

the remnant: the ordinary prophetic word for the survivors from a judgement (Isa. x. 20, 21).

together as the sheep of Bozrah : as a flock in the midst
of their pasture, they shall make great noise by reason of
the multitude of men. The breaker is gone up before 13
them : they have broken forth and passed on to the gate,
and are gone out thereat : and their king is passed on
before them, and the LORD at the head of them.

And I said, Hear, I pray you, ye heads of Jacob, and **3**
rulers of the house of Israel : is it not for you to know

Bozrah : in Edom, Isa. xxxiv. 6 ; Amos i. 12. But as this allusion to an Edomite town is unexplained, Nowack would read *betzirah* and explain it by Arab. *Sîra*, which is the sheltering fold in which sheep are penned at night. So Cheyne : 'as sheep into a fold.'

pasture (as Isa. v. 17) : the word is uncertain, perhaps it is the subject to the following verb, 'shall hum.'

make great noise, &c. Prof. G. A. Smith happily renders 'they shall hum with men,' which represents the swarming exiles gathering to their home. For the comparison with sheep see Ezek. xxxiv. 31, xxxvi. 38.

The breaker. Pococke and Pusey quote Jewish authorities to show that this was a recognized designation, borrowed from this passage, of Messiah ; he breaks the prison bars of the captives (cf. Isa. xliii. 6, xlviii. 20, lii. 11, 12, lxi. 1), and leads them out at the gate of the city of their captivity (cf. Nahum iii. 13). So Cheyne : 'We need not rack our brains as to who this conqueror is ; in the light of other prophecies he can be no other than the Messiah.'

their king : i. e. Yahweh, Exod. xiii. 21 ; Isa. lii. 12 ; Jer. xxxi. 8 f. It is evident that these two verses have more affinity with the great prophet of the Exile than with Micah's contemporary, Isaiah.

iii. Micah continues from ii. 11 to assail the leaders of Israel, the authorities whom the false prophets have flattered and misled.

1. And I said. The conjunction does not join it with what has preceded. It rather begins a new subject ; cf. 1 Samuel, which begins, 'And it came to pass.'

Jacob . . . Israel means Judah, verse 10.

heads : the official class, largely members of the royal house : Jer. xxi. 11, 12.

rulers. The word means *lit.* 'they who cut,' or 'decide' ; it is found in the Turkish *cadhi* to-day. Isaiah called the authorities 'rulers of Sodom,' i. 10. It is the triumph of a Christian civilization,

2 judgement? who hate the good, and love the evil; who
pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from
3 off their bones; who also eat the flesh of my people;
and they flay their skin from off them, and break their
bones: yea, they chop them in pieces, as for the pot,
4 and as flesh within the caldron. Then shall they cry
unto the LORD, but he will not answer them: yea, he
will hide his face from them at that time, according as
5 they have wrought evil in their doings. Thus saith the
LORD concerning the prophets that make my people to

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and it is unknown outside Christian communities, for judges to **know judgement.**

2. pluck off their skin. The rulers are conceived as shepherds tearing and devouring the sheep they ought to pasture; cf. Ezek. xxxiv. 2-10. Prof. G. A. Smith quotes the peasant's remark about the Seigneurs in Louis XIV's time: 'They crop us, as the sheep crops grass.'

their skin must refer to the people mentioned in verse 3. Wellhausen thinks this second part of verse 2 is an interpolation, because verse 3 repeats it.

3. chop... in pieces: the word elsewhere means 'widen'; LXX, however, identifies it with a similar word which means 'to break up bread.' Prof. G. A. Smith preserves the word in the text, meaning 'to spread out,' and renders 'and served it up as if from a pot, like meat from the thick of the cauldron.' These abuses were due to a social change. The nobles were no longer farmers, like Saul or Nabal, but merchant-princes, enriched by traffic with Phoenicia. Prices rose, a poor class developed, and the rich seemed to live at the expense of the poor, as in our modern States (see Robertson Smith, *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 347).

4. Then: *sc.* when the judgement begins, and the day of mercy is past.

he will not answer: cf. Ps. xviii. 41; Prov. xxi. 13.

hide his face: Deut. xxxi. 17, &c.; Ps. xliv. 24.

5. The false prophets are largely responsible for the oppressive rulers. As Pusey says, little seeing how far his words go, 'No error is hopeless save what is taught in the name of God.' 'The head and front of their offending was their use of their position to obtain easy and luxurious lives for themselves, while some took to prophesying as a means of earning a livelihood (Amos vii. 12; Mic. iii. 5). If they were not sufficiently bribed they would proclaim a holy war against an innocent man (Mic. iii. 5)' err; that bite with their teeth and cry, Peace; and whoso putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him: Therefore it shall be night unto you, 6 that ye shall have no vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down upon the prophets, and the day shall be black over them. And the seers shall be ashamed, and the diviners 7 confounded; yea, they shall all cover their lips: for there is no answer of God. But I truly am full of power 8 by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgement, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to

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(R. Bruce Taylor, *Expos. Times*, xiii. 226); cf. Isa. iii. 12, ix. 16; Lam. ii. 14; Ezek. xiii. 10, 19.

bite with their teeth: i. e. while they are fed they proclaim peace to their patrons, regardless of truth. When their alimony is withheld they denounce the innocent men who have not bribed them.

sanctify **war** (marg.): i. e. declare holy war, as if God had ordained it, referring only to private vengeance: cf. Jer. vi. 4; Joel iii. 9.

This disease of sham and interested prophecy ran side by side with the genuine prophecy all through the history of Israel. And it does still. It is interesting that the struggle between the true and the flattering prophets begins with the namesake of Micah in 1 Kings xxii.

6. The punishment of the rapacious rulers misled by the false prophets is a day of darkness and not of light, Lam. ii. 9; Amos v. 18.

7. shall all cover their lips: rather, their beard, or the hair of the upper lip; cf. Lev. xiii. 45; Ezek. xxiv. 17, 22, a sign of mourning and silence. The former reference places these shamed and silenced prophets with lepers. Nowack's suggestion that in that day all prophecy shall cease, true as well as false, only disturbs the force of the passage and the contrast with verse 8.

no answer of God: not specifically Israelitish, says Wellhausen.

8. The splendid assertion of the true prophet's consciousness. His mark is that he does not prophesy smooth things, but declares to the people their sins.

judgement in a subjective sense, yet verse 12 shows him full of judgement in an objective sense too.

might: the moral energy to utter the unpopular word.

Israel his sin. 9 Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel, that 10 abhor judgement, and pervert all equity. They build 11 up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD in the midst of us? no evil shall come 12 upon us. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed

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Wellhausen would strike out **by the spirit of the LORD,** because of a grammatical awkwardness. But neither Micah nor we could spare it.

9. He turns again to the rulers. Observe nothing is said of the king, Hezekiah. The evils of the time were clearly faults of the rich and great, of the prophets and the priests, which the king had not the power to control. These deluded men believed that punishment would not come for their iniquities: the inspired prophet assures them that it shall.

10. They build up. A change of *boneh* into *bonei* (Wellhausen) would enable us to avoid the awkward change in person, and read 'building up Zion on "bloods," i. e. murder' (cf. 1 Kings xxi; Jer. xxii. 13 ff.). Rich men increased their wealth by getting their Naboths out of the way (Ezek. xxii. 27). Ecclus. xxxiv. 21, 22 suggests another possible meaning, 'The bread of the needy is the life of the poor: he that depriveth him thereof is a man of blood. As one that slayeth his neighbour is he that taketh away his living; and as a shedder of blood is he that depriveth a hireling of his hire.'

Zion, the upper city, where the temple stood; **Jerusalem,** the rest of the town.

11. The priests, whose function it was to teach the Torah (Mal. ii. 7), are now taken to task. Hosea, it will be remembered, chiefly attacked them.

divine: the Hebrew word is always used in a bad sense.

Is not the LORD in the midst? For this self-delusion see ii. 7 and Jer. vii. 4, also Jer. v. 12.

12. This terrific doom was postponed on account of the repentance of Hezekiah, Jer. xxvi. 19, the only instance of a definite quotation in the prophetic literature. Yet it was fulfilled by the capture of the city, first in 621 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar (Neh. ii. 17, iv. 2, 10; Lam. v. 18), then in the awful devastation of 70 A.D. by Titus, after which it remained a ruin for fifty years. Is it to be as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.

But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the 4

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fulfilled more literally still, or do the bright promises with which ch. iv opens repeal the doom? During the desolation of the city, after Hadrian had exterminated 580,000 Jews and built Aelia on the site of Jerusalem, R. Akiba smiled when others wept at seeing a fox come out of the Holy of Holies. This prophecy of Micah being fulfilled, he looked the more for the prophecy of good things to come connected therewith.

plowed as a field. Richardson, visiting Jerusalem in the middle of the nineteenth century, records concerning the sacred ground of Zion: 'One part of it supported a crop of barley, another was undergoing the labour of the plough' (Keith on *Prophecy*, p. 257).

heaps: the Aramaic form; in Jer. xxvi. 18 the Hebrew; it means ruins in i. 6.

mountain of the house: the south-east hill, Moriah, where the House of God stood. It was a thicket when Abraham offered Isaac there; it shall be so again.

high places: Wellhausen reads singular with LXX; cf. i. 5. Though the high places were often places of irregular worship, that is not the allusion here. We are only to think of a high hill, like Monte Testaccio in Rome, which marks ruins.

iv. With fine artistic propriety a glowing vision of glory in the end of the days follows on the denunciation of judgement. Commentators, like Wellhausen and Nowack, who are convinced that the book from ch. iv onward comes from another hand and time than Micah's, not only miss the Divine element in a prophetic book, but also a very beautiful human element in the prophetic mind, viz. the blending of threat and promise, as the seer has visions of hope or fear.

Cheyne thinks the original draft was iv. 1–4, 11–13, v. 1–4, 7–15, which should be read together; afterwards the other verses were interpolated.

iv. 1–5. Verses 1–3 are quoted by Isa. ii. 2–4, with very slight variations. It was an oracle which brought the contemporary teachers of the age, Micah and Isaiah, into close harmony. Looking at events from different angles, here was one thing which they saw exactly alike. We know not which quotes the other, or whether both quoted a third, nor do we need to know. Stade's suggestion that the passage belongs to the later Assyrian period, and has been interpolated in both books, obtains the approval of Nowack. But the arguments advanced for this view are purely

mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in
the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above
2 the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many
nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to
the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God
of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will
walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law,

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subjective. Similar quotations from older prophecies probably occur in Isa. xv. 16, and Jer. xlix. 7-22.

1. in the latter days: *lit.* 'the end,' or 'the issue,' of the days. Deut. iv. 30, xxxi. 29; Jer. xxiii. 20, xxx. 24, xlviii. 47, xlix. 39; Ezek. xxxviii. 16; Dan. ii. 28, x. 14; Hos. iii. 5. It means the line which formed the prophet's horizon at the time. A better translation would be 'in the days to come.' Here we may venture to identify it with the time of Christ; elsewhere it points to what the Apostles call the last times. The term is relative to the speaker.

the mountain of the LORD'S house: this phrase serves as the natural link with iii. 12.

established: not for a time, but abidingly, is the meaning of the participle employed, Dan. ii. 44.

at the head **of the mountains** (marg.): the symbolism of the phrase was always understood; e. g. Aben Ezra: 'It is well known that the house of the temple is not high. The meaning then is that its fame shall go forth, and there shall return to it from all quarters persons with offerings, so that it shall be as if it were on the top of all hills, so that all the inhabitants of the earth should see it.' Ps. lxviii. 16; xlviii. 2. So Zech. xiv. 10 and Joel iii. 12 are symbolic.

shall flow: like rivers, like the Nile, the Hebrew word suggests; cf. Jer. xxxi. 12, li. 44.

2. The words of the peoples as they go up to Jerusalem for instruction end with **in his paths.** Jerusalem as the religious metropolis of the world; cf. Isa. xi. 10, lx. 3; Jer. iii. 17; Zech. ii. 11; viii. 22, 23.

of his ways: i. e. those parts of His commandments which are necessary for our present needs; cf. Ps. xciv. 12. The word for **teach** is the verbal root in Torah, law.

the law: better, 'teaching,' for it does not mean the Mosaic Torah, but that instruction given to the seekers from time to time (Deut. xvii. 11), out of which the Mosaic law grew. Cheyne would render 'revelation.'

and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he 3
shall judge between many peoples, and shall reprove
strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords
into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks:
nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither
shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every 4
man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none
shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of
hosts hath spoken it. For all the peoples will walk 5

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3. When all submit to one Divine law there is a permanent and sufficient Court of Arbitration established, and war becomes unnecessary. Nothing shows better that the Roman Church is not identical with the Divine law than the fact that her unquestioned sway for nearly a thousand years never produced the peace here prophesied. The reign of peace will only begin when the Prince of Peace, and he alone, is allowed to give instruction to the nations.

between: cf. Isa. v. 3.

reprove: rather, as in marg., 'decide concerning.' The supreme Judge decides.

plowshares: Isa. ii. 4; Joel iii. 10. The Hebrew word is not beyond dispute, but the old versions rendered it thus. In 1 Sam. xiii. 20 it is rendered 'coulter.'

4. We here leave the words common to Isaiah and Micah. When war ceases men can enjoy their own. Apparently the social oppressions denounced in ch. iii have also ceased. Peace abroad brings peace at home; as war abroad is the great argument for postponing domestic reforms. The Palestinian image for peace, corresponding to our sitting by our hearth, is basking under the vine and fig, 1 Kings iv. 25; 2 Kings xviii. 31; Zech. iii. 10. It is specially suitable on the lips of Micah the countryman.

the mouth of the LORD, &c. This idyllic peace and rest for which the world sighs can only result from a revelation, a teaching, from God.

5. will walk. This verse is, as translated, obviously inconsistent with verse 2. Nowack suggests that it was added by the interpolator of verses 1-3. But Wellhausen's rendering makes the verse a comment on the foregoing, which sets the present in contrast with the promised future: 'all the nations walk (as yet) in the name of their god, but we will walk in the name of Yahweh,' every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

6 In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven away, and
7 her that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount
8 Zion from henceforth even for ever. And thou, O tower

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sc. until the day when all the nations will say, Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, verse 2.

Unfortunately the Hebrew verb has not a constant usage of tenses which enables us to fix a temporal point. Here the tense is the imperfect or future; and it is not the obvious meaning to render 'walk' instead of 'will walk.' Grammatically it might be 'let all the nations walk in the name of their gods, yet we will walk,' &c., but that would not bring the verse into harmony with the preceding.

Pusey quotes Jer. ii. 11, and says that Israel must be as constant to his God as the heathen are to theirs before the desired consummation can come. But this neither suits the grammar nor the context. Perhaps the simple explanation is, that a brilliant prospect like that of verses 1-3 came to the prophet in a flash, and, too bright to last, faded rapidly into the more sober prospect of verse 5. Micah had not yet conceived the idea of Yahweh being the God of all the earth, and the venerable idolatries of the nations vanished away. And have we yet conceived, or believingly grasped it?

iv. 6-8. These verses have no connexion with verses 1-5, and yet, pieced on to them, they make a beautiful completion of the picture. They seem to assume, as ii. 12, 13 did, that the Exile has taken place, and this is the promise of return. Indeed the words of verse 6 are imitated by Zeph. iii. 19, and remind us of Ezek. xxxiv. 16.

6. In that day: i. e. in the Messianic age, verse 1.

7. a remnant: i. e. the remnant to which the Messianic promises belong, v. 6, 7. This implies a distinct eschatological conception which one is inclined to think later than Micah.

her that halted . . . and . . . was cast off is not a section of the people, but the whole body of exiles.

henceforth: viz. from that time, equivalent therefore to 'thenceforth.' For the Lord's reign cf. Isa. xxiv. 23, lii. 7.

8. This announces the restoration of the kingship in Jerusalem. It is hard to think that Micah, writing in the days of Hezekiah, of the flock, the hill of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come; yea, the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem. Now why dost 9

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would speak of restoring what had not yet been destroyed. The verse must be later than his time.

tower of the flock. It is assumed that Zion is laid waste (as in iii. 12); shepherds watch their flocks and build their tower for shelter and observation on mount Zion. The expression, *Migdal Eder*, occurs in Gen. xxxv. 21 as a place where Jacob fed his flock, but there can be no reference to this, as this tower is defined as the *Ophel* (see marg.), the hill on mount Zion. The word *Ophel* is used for the south-east peak of the temple hill (2 Chron. xxvii. 3, xxxiii. 14; Neh. iii. 26, xi. 21). Here it is used as in Isa. xxxii. 14, simply as 'a hill.' The *Migdal Eder* was, however, even in Jerome's time identified as a place 1,000 paces from Bethlehem, and the Rabbis drew from this passage the inference, 'This is the place where in the last days Messiah shall be revealed.' This tempts Pusey to identify the tower of the flock with Bethlehem, and to see here a prophecy of Christ's birth there (cf. v. 2). But it is always precarious to read Messianic prophecies into enigmatic passages.

the former dominion: that is, the pre-exilic kingship; LXX even adds 'out of Babylon.'

the daughter of Jerusalem. Wellhausen would expect 'daughter of Israel.'

iv. 9, 10 present a different picture. They belong to a time before the Exile. They foretell the Exile, but also the deliverance from it. They should be printed in a paragraph alone, with asterisks between what precedes and what follows. Prof. G. A. Smith attaches verse 8 to them, and treats 'tower of the flock' as a figure of Jerusalem isolated and besieged. But this gives us the impossible collocation of a promise of restoration in verse 8, followed by the threat of exile in verse 10. If, on the other hand, verses 9, 10 are treated as a separate oracle, it might be placed in Hezekiah's time, or later, when Nebuchadnezzar was threatening Jerusalem. Its only obscurity is its context. In itself it is clear and rich in comfort.

why dost thou (*sc.* daughter of Zion) **cry out aloud?** Cf. Isa. xxii. 2, 5. This might be uttered in the days of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib's host was attacking Jerusalem, 701 B. C. But in this case we should have to regard the clause, 'shalt come even unto Babylon,' as an interpolation. It is better therefore to date the oracle later than Micah, when the threat of Babylonian and not of Assyrian conquest was on the horizon.

thou cry out aloud? Is there no king in thee, is thy counsellor perished, that pangs have taken hold of thee
10 as of a woman in travail? Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and shalt dwell in the field, and shalt come even unto Babylon; there shalt thou be rescued; there shall the LORD
11 redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies. And now

Is there no king? implying that the people were seeking foreign aid, Isa. xix. 11, xxxvi. 5.

thy counsellor: synonym for 'king'; the root *mèlech*, 'king,' in Aramaic means 'to counsel'; cf. Isa. ix. 6.

woman in travail: Jer. vi. 24, xxii. 23; Hos. xiii. 13. The comparison is only with the pain, not with the fruit, of the birth-pangs.

10. Be in pain, &c. The stress is again only on the pain. The image of the bringing forth of children is not pressed: on the contrary, so far from bringing forth children, the daughter of Zion is herself to go forth into exile.

labour to bring forth. The word elsewhere means breaking out, like water (Job xl. 23, 'swell'), or of an ambush (Judges xx. 33), or of a lion from the reeds (Ezek. xxxii. 2). The meaning may be, in disregard of the image, 'break forth' into the Exile.

come even unto Babylon. As Nowack points out, the passage as a whole might well be Micah's; it is parallel to Hos. ii. 16–20 in thought. But Micah could hardly have written 'unto Babylon,' which was not on his political horizon. Babylon only succeeded to the place of Nineveh a century later, and the transportation described in 2 Kings xvii. 24, and confirmed by the Annals of Sargon (*Records of the Past*, vii. 29), would hardly suggest the phrase to Micah, except by such a direct and miraculous revelation (Pusey, of course, explains it in this way) as we could only defend if we had far stronger evidence than we possess that the contents of a prophetic book were written by the prophet who gives to the book his name.

there shalt thou be rescued: one of the richest of evangelic promises.

iv. 11–13 constitute a little oracle which is attached not unnaturally to the bright promise of verse 10, or perhaps, as Cheyne suggests, it originally followed on verse 4. The tables are turned, Zion triumphs over her enemies. Observe the resemblance to Joel iii. 16–21, and to the time of Ezekiel.

many nations are assembled against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye see *its desire* upon Zion.
But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither 12
understand they his counsel: for he hath gathered them
as the sheaves to the threshing-floor. Arise and thresh, 13
O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many peoples: and thou shalt devote their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of
the whole earth. Now shalt thou gather thyself in 5

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11. now. This introduction implies a contrast with what had been previously said; cf. iv. 9 and v. 1.

many nations: all those neighbour peoples—Edom, Ammon, Moab, Philistia—who so pitilessly rejoiced in the fall of Jerusalem and the Captivity in Babylon; cf. Obadiah.

defiled: not only by her iniquities (as Ps. cvi. 38; Isa. xxiv. 5), but now by the desolation which is their punishment.

see its desire upon. This is exactly illustrated by Obad. 12–14.

12. they know not: cf. Isa. lv. 8. These nations in their temporary triumph little know that Yahweh gathers them together, not to triumph over Israel as they think, but to be threshed out by their hated adversary.

for: *chi*, should be rendered 'that.'

13. Arise and thresh. What a contrast to 'be in pain and labour' addressed to the same daughter of Zion in verse 10. Evidently tracts of time lie between the paragraphs.

thine horn iron. Threshing was done either by oxen treading out the sheaves (Deut. xxv. 4), or by wheels of iron, or boards set with sharp flints. For the figure cf. Isa. xli. 15; Jer. li. 33.

thou shalt devote their gain unto Yahweh: not as marg. says, 'I will devote'; it is the old form of second person singular (Wellhausen).

their gain: *sc.* their accumulated spoil.

Lord of the whole earth. Adon, not Yahweh here: the distinction is lost in our English version, because Yahweh is rendered 'Lord.'

For the 'devoting' cf. Joshua vi. 18, 24. For the idea cf. Zech. xiv. 14.

v. **1.** This verse stands by itself, and is a third picture of Jerusalem in siege. It might well be written by Micah; and is as near to verses 9, 10 as it is far from 11–13.

troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.

2 But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which art little to

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in troops: *sc.* marauding bands, and Jerusalem is addressed as the daughter of such bands. She was full of robberies. Her troops also were bent on other evil, Jer. v. 7. She is 'gathered in troops' now for destruction; cf. 2 Chron. xxv. 12. Nowack, however, would translate the verb 'tear thyself,' *sc.* in mourning.

shall smite: for this indignity to the king of the time referred to, cf. 1 Kings xxii. 24; Job xvi. 10.

Israel applied to Judah; cf. i. 13. Pusey thinks the prophecy refers to the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. To Pusey and the old commentators all things were possible: inspiration was a Divine freak, freed from all historical or psychological conditions. We are bound to keep within more sober interpretations. If Micah saw the fall of Samaria, we may reasonably think that he foresaw the fall of Jerusalem and the indignity put on Zedekiah the captive king. But to have foreseen the Roman siege hundreds of years later, and to have described it in these enigmatical and inconclusive terms, could have served no spiritual purpose then, as its questionable elucidation by Pusey serves no spiritual purpose now. Cheyne, on the other hand, closely connects verse 1 with verse 2, thus: The daughter of troops is the invading Assyrian; who besieges Jerusalem and insults the king, but the ruler in Israel shall issue from Beth-lehem (see *Cambridge Bible*, in loc.). This is a very attractive suggestion of our most ingenious commentator.

v. 2-9 a grand Apocalyptic picture.

2-4. This great Messianic prophecy was always reckoned Messianic by the Jews until Christ was born in Beth-lehem, when the difficult task of explaining it away had to begin. The Jewish fable that Messiah *was* born at Beth-lehem on the day of the destruction of Jerusalem, but was hidden for the sins of the people, was composed to meet the objection of Tertullian and other Christian writers that, since none of David's race were then left at Beth-lehem, this prophecy of Micah could not now be fulfilled—if Jesus was not Messiah.

Beth-lehem Ephrathah: i. e. Beth-lehem in the district of Ephrathah, Joshua xv. 59; 1 Sam. xvii. 12; Ruth i. 2 (LXX). The gloss in Gen. xxxv. 19, xlviii. 7, which identifies the Ephrathah of Rachel's burying-place in Benjamin with Beth-lehem in Judah, is best explained by the fact that Beth-lehem was in a district named Ephrathah. The modern tendency, approved even be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. Therefore 3 will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the residue of his

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by Prof. G. A. Smith, to strike out Beth-lehem and read Beth-Ephrath, is absolutely gratuitous (see A. C. Welch, *Expos. Times*, xiii. 235); it is derived merely from the reading of LXX, 'And thou, Beth-lehem, house of Ephratha.'

The names are richly significant: Beth-lehem, 'House of Bread,' and Ephrathah, 'Fruitful.' Beth-lehem, in spite of Turkish misrule, is fruitful still. Beth-lehem was David's city; naturally Messianic hopes centred on it, insignificant as it was; so insignificant as not to be mentioned in Joshua xv. 59, where the LXX inserted it.

little to be among, &c.: not 'too small,' which the grammar does not allow.

thousands: the name for the smallest district, rather like our 'hundred.' Gideon belonged to the poorest 'thousand' in Manasseh, Judges vi. 15: see Num. i. 16, x. 4; Joshua xxii. 14.

unto me: rather, 'for me'; Yahweh is speaking.

ruler recalls iv. 8. Indeed, our prophecy here connects itself easily with iv. 6–8, while iv. 9—v. 1 is a series of interpolations.

whose goings forth. The thought is of David, whose history seemed to be in a far past: Messiah was conceived of as a David *redivivus*, Ezek. xxxiv. 23, xxxvii. 24; Hos. iii. 5. Nowack cannot understand how Micah could think of David as in so dim an antiquity, and dates the passage in the Exile. But the solemn addition **from everlasting** gives a deeper tone to the prophecy, which might come as easily to Micah as to any later prophet; it shows that Messiah will not be only David restored, but One who was in the beginning with God. We are not called on to explain away this solemn and wonderful forecast, especially when we have seen it fulfilled in the Babe of Beth-lehem, who came into the world out of the bosom of the Father. Micah could not understand his own deep saying; but how foolish of us to discredit it when history has made its meaning plain!

3. Therefore will he give them up: i. e. Yahweh will deliver Israel into the hands of its foes. Verse 3 is a commentary on the prophecy which definitely refers to two prophecies of Isaiah, the virgin bringing forth her son (Isa. vii. 14), and the return of the remnant (Isa. xi. 12).

then the residue of his brethren: rather, 'and until the remnant,' &c. 'The verse offers us,' says A. C. Welch (*Expos. Times*, xiii. 235), 'an early example of Jewish exegesis and an

4 brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand, and shall feed *his flock* in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God: and they shall abide; for now shall he be great
5 unto the ends of the earth. And this *man* shall be *our*

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illustration of how prophecy was interpreted.' When this verse was inserted, the passages in Isaiah were already classical, and the object was to bring them into relation with the Messianic prophecy of Micah. The 'he' must be Yahweh.

his brethren: *sc.* Messiah's. 'The remnant shall return,' says Isaiah (Isa. xi. 12; Hos. iii. 5). This little commentary acquires deep significance if one realizes the exiles in Babylon poring over the utterances of Isaiah and Micah. 'When shall the ruler come out of Beth-lehem and feed his flock, as Micah said?' 'It will not be until, as Isaiah said, the virgin conceives, until the remnant returns.' Every verse of Scripture has been enriched by the search and the tears, the questions and the aspirations of readers trying to draw water from the wells of salvation.

4. he shall stand: *sc.* Messiah. Isa. lxi. 5 for the shepherd standing.

in the majesty of the name: cf. Isa. xxx. 27. This language agrees with the presentation of Christ in John's gospel as the Good Shepherd, and yet the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And this unique suitability of the phrases to the historic Messiah appears still more strikingly in the closing words **now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth,** with which cf. Ps. ii. 8, lxxii. 8. Messiah's kingdom will be far greater than the Assyrian.

That the prophet spoke greater things than he knew must be admitted. He was awakening a Messianic hope which lived and grew until Christ came, and when Christ came received an extraordinary and inconceivable fulfilment. But so far as we can see, what was present to his own mind was only a ruler arising out of the little country town, fourteen miles over the hill from his native place, a ruler, not from the capital, but from the people, who would wisely govern his people. Accordingly, from the great and mystical forecast, which to us is rich with spiritual significance, he turns to the almost prosaic and strictly national politics of his time. The Messiah whom he has foretold, who actually was to be the Saviour of the world, fades into the light of common day, and is simply the leader who shall deliver Jerusalem from the Assyrian, a mere Hezekiah, or his like.

5. And this man shall be our peace. Prof. G. A. Smith peace: when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, 6 and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: and

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makes this clause the close of verse 4. This is very tempting, cf. Isa. ix. 6; Eph. ii. 14. There is no Messianic description with which we more readily or thankfully identify our Lord Jesus Christ. We would rather therefore draw it to the description of the Ideal that has just been sketched, than to the more immediate description of Assyrian invasion and deliverance which follows.

when the Assyrian. Pusey, to secure the Messianic reference in verses 2-4, takes this allegorically: the Assyrian is simply Satan, or the opponent of Christ's Church. But considering the historical situation in Micah's time, the Assyrian destroying Israel, and threatening Judah, we cannot execute this *tour de force.* Micah, as a seer, saw farther than he knew; but, so far as he knew, he was foretelling the advent of a leader who would deliver Judah from the impending Assyrian invasion.

palaces: LXX reads a similar Hebrew word meaning 'lands,' which is more probable.

seven shepherds: the relation of the seven shepherds to the one Messiah is unexplained (for seven and eight as an indefinite number, cf. Amos i. 3); this division of the deliverer's function into seven and eight (cf. Isa. xxxii. 1) remains unexplained, because, so far as we know, the prophecy had no exact fulfilment. Certainly no Jewish leaders ever wasted the land of Assyria literally. Wellhausen thinks these numbers rank the passage with the later Apocalyptic, of which the Book of Daniel is our greatest example. 'The older prophecy,' he says, 'does not love chiaroscuro, or give the appearance of knowing more intimately the details of the future than it actually does.'

6. waste the land: *lit.* 'feed off.' These leaders are thought of as shepherds who shepherd the enemy's land with a sword, *sc.* instead of a crook. Cf. Jer. vi. 3; Ezek. xxxiv. 18, for shepherding in this bad sense.

land of Nimrod: Babylon, Gen. x. 9 f., but, as Gen. x. 11 shows, it includes Assyria.

in the entrances thereof. Nowack endeavours to show from Ps. xxxvii. 14; Ezek. xxi. 28 that the Hebrew word here may be rendered 'with swords.' But Nah. iii. 13 explains 'entrances.'

he shall deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh
7 into our land, and when he treadeth within our border. And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst
of many peoples as dew from the LORD, as showers
8 upon the grass; that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth
for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall
be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples,

---

he shall deliver us: we should expect 'they shall,' but evidently it goes back to the one shepherd of verse 4.

Certainly the reference to the Assyrian makes it probable that these verses are Micah's. But this Wellhausen and Nowack seek to evade by saying that Assyrian is used for Babylon (Lam. v. 6), for Persia (Ezra vi. 22), and even for Syria (Ps. lxxxiii. 8); cf. also Zech. x. 11. But this seems as far-fetched in one direction as Pusey's contention is in the other.

7–9 form another little oracle in which Israel, or the remnant, is a Messiah to the world, quite distinct from what goes before and after. The expectation of a Jewish world-dominion is, Wellhausen thinks, late (Isa. xlix. 22–26, lx. 12; Zech. xiv. 17), and no trace of it is found in the assured writings of Isaiah. But obviously if iv. 1–3 and v. 2–4 are Micah's, this passage may be his too.

the remnant: iv. 7; this is the common thought of Isaiah, e. g. Isa. x. 21. There will be a remnant of the people saved, and they will be blessed and a blessing.

as dew . . . as showers. Nowack thinks the point is, that these natural phenomena are God's work, and not man's, and that the dew and raindrops are innumerable. But this is very unimaginative. Dew in Palestine during the hot months was the only source of life and refreshment for plants, and thus it was an exquisite image of Divine truth and teaching, cf. Deut. xxxii. 2; and so in Ecclus. xviii. 16, 'Shall not the dew assuage the scorching heat? So is a word better than a gift'; and xliii. 22, 'A mist coming speedily is the healing of all things; a dew coming after heat shall bring cheerfulness.'

We cannot help taking the image therefore to mean that Israel will be a teacher in the midst of the nations. This it has been, especially in the form of Christianity. At the same time, the concluding clause of the verse emphasizes the fact that Israel's message to the world is not from man or of man; it comes, the grace of God, the marvellous announcement of salvation, through a chosen people, but from God. The verse acquires its full meaning when we read Gal. i. 12.

as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion
among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through,
treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and there is none 9
to deliver. Let thine hand be lifted up above thine
adversaries, and let all thine enemies be cut off.

And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, 10
that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee,
and will destroy thy chariots: and I will cut off the 11
cities of thy land, and will throw down all thy strong

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8. as a lion. It is certainly a strange contrast to the gentle dew, and the fierce note of triumph in verse 9, where it is not so much a wish as an assurance, seems inconsistent with the beneficent presence of Israel as the dew among nations. But God himself is compared to a lion by Amos iii. 8, and the severity of the Divine nature, mingling with its tenderness (cf. Rev. v. 5, vi. 16), may well be reproduced in the people of God. We need not therefore surrender our interpretation of the dew because the remnant of Israel is to be like a lion as well.

9. Let thine hand be lifted up: Jacob is addressed. Lifted up, as contrasted with the hand hanging down in weakness and ineffectiveness, Exod. xiv. 8; Deut. xxxii. 27; Isa. xxvi. 11.

v. 10–15. Here we return to the indisputable Micah; it is an echo of chs. i–iii. The passage might easily follow on i. 7. Its early date is shown by this: it does not refer to the 'high places,' as a post-Deuteronomic writing would, but only to the images and Mazzeboth and Asheras, the idolatrous symbols that were reared in the scattered shrines before the centralization of the cultus. Nor is it certain that even these are censured. They are to be destroyed along with other external helps, horses and chariots and cities, divinations and soothsayings. Micah does not, like Hosea and Amos, attack the religious practices of his day, but the irreligion which went with those practices. These verses may, however, be closely connected with 2–9, as a description of the Messianic time when the implements of war and of idolatry will be alike abolished, and the enemies of the Lord will be vanquished (Introd.).

10. horses, like the **chariots,** used in war. Deut. xvii. 16, xx. 1; Isa. ii. 7, xxx. 16, xxx. 1–5; Zech. ix. 10.

11. cities: i. e. the walled towns (cf. Hos. viii. 14) in contrast with the unwalled villages, Ezek. xxxviii. 11.

strong holds: Isa. ii. 15, xxx. 25, as well as Hos. viii. 14.

12 holds: and I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand;
13 and thou shalt have no *more* soothsayers: and I will cut
off thy graven images and thy pillars out of the midst of
thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine
14 hands. And I will pluck up thine Asherim out of the
15 midst of thee: and I will destroy thy cities. And I will
execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the nations
which hearkened not.

12. witchcrafts out of thine hand: evidently some divining objects, rods, crystals or what not, held in the hand.

soothsayers: or 'diviners of the clouds,' which were studied in Chaldea for the purposes of divination; cf. Isa. ii. 6, viii. 19. Micah does not, like Isaiah, denounce these aids as illegitimate; he only says that as aids they shall be cut off. The prophecy may be taken as a denunciation, or as an evangelic promise.

13. graven images: there is nothing here of Isaiah's iconoclasm (Isa. xxx. 22, xxxi. 7); we should not know from this passage that graven images were forbidden any more than horses or cities.

pillars: the Mazzeboth, and the wooden figures of the goddess Asherah, the Assyrian Ishtar, called Asherim, parts of the ancient cultus of Palestine, were probably admitted, from old custom, until Josiah's reform. While the local sanctuaries survived the pillars were permitted, for they were the marks or symbols of the sanctuary. Hosea does not condemn them (iii. 4). Isaiah sanctions them (xix. 19). And so Jacob set up and anointed the pillar for the sanctuary at Beth-el. But Deuteronomy is explicit against them (Deut. xvi. 21, 22, xxvii. 15), and so is Jeremiah; still more the later legislation (e. g. Exod. xxiii. 24, xxxiv. 13; Lev. xxvi. 1).

14. cities. Nowack would read *'Atzabbeika*, 'images,' citing 2 Chron. xxiv. 18, where the word is used alongside of 'Asherim.' Cheyne renders the word 'enemies.'

Amos said that God would punish Israel as well as the nations (Amos i. 2); Micah says He will punish the nations as well as Israel. It is not necessary to assign this verse to a later date, because the punishment of the nations became familiar in the later prophecy, Isa. lx. 12; Zech. xiv. 17; Joel iii. 9. Pusey takes the view that these verses bear an evangelic burden; war and fenced cities shall cease (cf. Zech. ii. 4, 5); idolatrous practices shall disappear. Only the heathen shall be punished. It is a picture of the cleansing of the Church and the wrath of God resting on the wicked.

Photo: Photochrom Co.

BETHLEHEM

Hear ye now what the LORD saith: Arise, contend 6
thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy
voice. Hear, O ye mountains, the LORD's controversy, 2
and ye enduring foundations of the earth: for the LORD
hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead
with Israel. O my people, what have I done unto thee? 3

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vi. 1-8. This great utterance has been called 'the most important in the prophetic literature'; it closes with a definition of religion which is 'the greatest saying of the Old Testament.' The tenderness of the plea reminds us of Hosea, the appeal to argument reminds us of the wisdom-literature. It thus seems to epitomize the teaching of the Old Testament, as it prepares us for the revelation of the New. It finally answers the question, What is true religion? But the further question, How it can be realized, was not answered until Christ, 'whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting,' appeared with the invitation and the promise, 'Come unto me—learn of me—I will give you rest.'

1. Arise, contend thou. Wellhausen says the prophet is addressed as Yahweh's plenipotentiary. He is to stand before the court and urge Yahweh's case against the erring people. The steadfast and everlasting hills that gaze on the generations of human folly and sin stand as the judges; just as in Isa. i. 2 heaven and earth are appealed to for a verdict against man; cf. Deut. xxxii. 1.

2. Yahweh has said to the prophet, Arise and state My case; immediately he obeys and addresses the hills.

enduring: this is very fine in the English, but the Hebrew word is not used elsewhere in quite this sense; Wellhausen therefore is justified in the conjectural change, 'and give ear, O foundations of the earth.'

contend and **controversy** are the same word in Hebrew.

plead: the reflexive form would be better rendered by 'argue' (Prof. G. A. Smith), for Yahweh has condescended to leave the judgement-seat and to come down into the arena and open an argument with His people, to hear and to speak.

3. O my people. This one tender word, repeated in verse 5, contains a whole volume of reproof, and gives deep emotion to the argument. Yahweh does not mention His people's sin, but asks only what have been His faults!

The 'wearying' might be through making too hard demands, Isa. xliii. 22-24, or by unfulfilled promises, Jer. ii. 31, but neither complaint could be made against Him. When this prophecy was made the endless and burdensome regulations of the Jewish law were not elaborated; and such demands as the Mosaic law did

and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.
4 For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and
redeemed thee out of the house of bondage; and I sent
5 before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people,
remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and
what Balaam the son of Beor answered him; *remember*
from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteous
6 acts of the LORD. Wherewith shall I come before the
LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I

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make were here brushed aside in favour of strictly moral and religious requirements.

testify against me: reason, justice, so this great prophecy implies, regulates the relations between man and his God. Yahweh's dealings with His people had not been exigent, but redemptive all along.

4. the house of bondage: so Deut. v. 6, vi. 12, vii. 8; also Exod. xiii. 3, 14, xx. 2 (J E); so once in Jer. xxxiv. 13.

Aaron: Exod. iv. 14, 27-30.

Miriam: Exod. xv. 20, whose timbrel then led the grateful praise of ransomed Israel. M. Dieulafoi, in his *David the King*, p. 32, shows how in the nomad life women are often commanders and generals, like Miriam or Deborah.

5. Cf. Num. xxii-xxiv. If Balaam had cursed, the curse would have fallen; so it is implied. But the **righteous acts,** *lit.* 'righteousnesses,' of Yahweh (a remarkable expression; cf. vii. 9; Judges v. 11; 1 Sam. xii. 7; Ps. xl. 10, xxxvi. 10, li. 14) closed his lips.

consulted: Num. xxii. 4.

remember now: a tender mode of appeal, says Pusey, like our 'do now remember.' Yahweh might command, but He pleads, that He may win.

from Shittim unto Gilgal: struck out as a gloss by Wellhausen and Prof. G. A. Smith. Ewald thought the words a reference mark to the passage in Numbers containing the story of Balaam. This is quite improbable. Shittim was the last station before the entry into Canaan (Hos. ix. 10; Joel iii. 18), and Gilgal the first in the promised land, where the reproach of Egypt was 'rolled' away. The story of Balaam could not be inserted between these two. If we retain the words, Yahweh's plea concentrates attention on the marvels of the crossing of the Jordan and the first entrance into the land which He had given them.

6. Now Israel speaks. He means well. He is ignorant. He has tried to obey the law, bringing the year-old calves as he come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of 7 rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, 8

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understood Yahweh demanded, Lev. ix. 2, 3. This reminds us again of Hos. iv. 1, 6, &c.[1].

The desire of the people to know what is required, and their readiness to offer the extraordinary sacrifices, including even the firstborn, looks, so says Nowack, more like the time of Manasseh than that of Ahaz and Hezekiah. But, as Wellhausen says, that does not preclude Micah's authorship.

bow myself implies deep reverence: Isa. xxxiii. 5, lvii. 15. The idea of Yahweh being high and removed from the people for their sins is found in Hos. v. 15; Isa. xviii. 4; see i. 3.

burnt offerings: not sin offerings which, as Nowack points out, belong to the time after Ezekiel, and to the Priestly Code. The year-old calves, Lev. ix. 3.

7. The people would bring more than was strictly demanded, such hecatombs as Solomon offered, 1 Kings viii. 63, or other kings, 2 Chron. xxx. 24, xxxv. 7.

rivers of oil. (Cf. Job xx. 17 for the expression.) Oil was used in all the meal offerings (Lev. ii. 1, 2, 4–7, vii. 10, 12), and so was needed for the sacrifices, Exod. xxix. 2, 23, 40; Lev. vi. 15, 21; Num. viii. 8. But we do not, as Wellhausen says, know any occasion in the cultus for oil in rivers. It is the exaggeration into which a formal and materialistic religion usually runs. Nowack thinks that in the earlier cultus oil may have been used in this wholesale way (*Lehrbuch der Hebräischen Archäologie*, ii. 208 f.).

my firstborn: 2 Kings xvi. 3 shows how this was done in extreme peril. But Ewald thinks the reference brings the passage down to the time of Manasseh, who offered one of his sons, 2 Kings xxi. 2 f.; afterwards the practice became common, Jer. vii. 31, xix. 4–6; Ezek. xvi. 20, xx. 26. See also Lev. xviii. 21, xx. 2; 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Isa. lvii. 5.

8. All these exaggerated and extravagant offerings do not avail. Yahweh demands not that men come *with* things to offer, but that they offer themselves; cf. Isa. i. 10–15 and Hos. vi. 6.

He hath shewed thee: Deut. x. 12, 13. The prophetic what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

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[1] Bishop Butler, not realizing the rapid changes in the *loquiturs* of the prophet, thought verses 6, 7 was Balak's question and verse 8 Balaam's answer. Colour was given to this by 2 Kings iii. 27, where another king of Moab offers up his firstborn.

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knowledge of God stands over against the ritual and the offerings, not perhaps to supersede them, but certainly announcing itself as indispensable, if they are to avail. Wellhausen quotes Deut. xxx. 11–14; Matt. xxv. 40; John iv. 24.

O man: this individualizes and makes religion personal; it universalizes and extends it to all men.

what doth the LORD require? Not the sacrifices and offerings, which are of no moral worth, but a certain state of the soul and a correspondent course of life, covered by the words justice, mercy, and humility.

to do justly: this Amos had taught, e. g. Amos v. 24.

to love mercy: this Hosea had added, e. g. Hos. vi. 6, viii. 13. Micah adds an idea which is all his own, viz. **to walk humbly with thy God**. The phrase, *hatzne'a leketh*, is unique; only in one other place does the verb occur, and it is there in an adjectival form, and is rendered 'the lowly' (Prov. xi. 2). In Aramaic the verbal root means to be hidden, and in the feminine it applies to a modest bride. The idea, therefore, is that kind of inward and secret submission to God which is exhibited e. g. in the *Imitatio Christi*. It is the exact opposite of 'the pride of Israel' rebuked by Amos vi. 8, viii. 7, and Hos. v. 5, vii. 10.

The significance of this crucial passage is pointed out by Duhm (*Theology of the Prophets*, p. 186). It marks the decisive contrast between the popular conception of God, and that which it was the function of the prophets to teach. 'To the people God was an unlimited despot, ruling arbitrarily, whose wrath, temper, bloodthirst, must be propitiated with costly gifts, and even with the offering of oneself or of one's dearest possession.' In the books of Judges and Samuel that is the notion of God that prevails. Micah does not compromise with this conception, or attempt to modify it; he sweeps it away. Yahweh is a moral being, and He demands a moral offering from the heart of His worshippers. We cannot wonder that the O. T. writers, and even the prophets themselves, did not always remain at the height of this great argument: for after nineteen centuries of Christian teaching, a large number of people, and even some theological writers, still hold the old view of God; orthodox theology seldom ventures, with the boldness of Micah, to brush aside the rudimentary conceptions of God which prevail in the O. T., or, with a frank acceptance of the N. T. revelation, to avow that God is a moral being who demands a moral service, and therefore nothing which we count immoral must for a moment be attributed to Him; nor

The voice of the LORD crieth unto the city, and *the* 9
man of wisdom will see thy name: hear ye the rod, and
who hath appointed it. Are there yet the treasures of 10
wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant
measure that is abominable? Shall I be pure with 11

can we, by any service which violates the principles of morality, bring to Him an acceptable offering.

vi. 9–16. Yahweh's complaint of the dishonest practices which prevailed in business, and His denunciation of the judgements which must fall upon them.

From here to the end of the book 'the state of the text is as confused as the condition of society which it describes' (Prof. G. A. Smith). And yet, while the details are obscure, nothing could be plainer than the teaching.

9. The prophet calls attention to the voice of Yahweh speaking to the city, *sc.* Jerusalem. For the crying cf. Prov. viii. 1, 3, 4; the whole passage echoes the wisdom-literature. The second clause is difficult, and must be taken as a parenthesis. By slight corrections of the text we get the sense: ''Tis salvation or wisdom (cf. Prov. ii. 7, xviii. 1; Job v. 12, where it is translated 'enterprise,' for the word [1]) to fear [2] thy name.' The third clause defies grammatical interpretation. Our English translation is a *tour de force,* for 'rod' is masculine, and yet the suffix of the verb is feminine. Wellhausen, by the help of the LXX, and by drawing the *'od* with which verse 10 begins into verse 9 as *'ir*, obtains the pertinent sense: 'Hear, O tribe (*sc.* Judah), and council of the city.' For this we may be grateful, but we cannot know that it is what Micah wrote. If we keep the text, the 'rod' must mean the Assyrian, and approaching judgement.

10. The text is confused. Wellhausen turns the **Are there** into a verb meaning 'shall I overlook' (Lam. iii. 17); this only involves supplying the letter *h* in the Hebrew.

scant measure: *lit.* 'ephah,' a measure of six bushels: see Deut. xxv. 14, 16; Amos viii. 5, where the word **abominable** also appears in the same connexion.

11. Shall I be pure: the verb should be active, so Jerome, *numquid iustificabo?* We must supply the object by the altered vocalization: 'Shall I regard as pure (one) with wicked balances?' For the balances, weights and the bag to hold them, see Lev. xix. 36; Deut. xxv. 13; Prov. xvi. 11.

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[1] The word is derived from *jesh,* and means 'that which really is.'

[2] If the word 'see' is retained we must compare Jer. ii. 31 and Exod. xx. 18.

wicked balances, and with a bag of deceitful weights?
12 For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the
inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is
13 deceitful in their mouth. Therefore I also have smitten
thee with a grievous wound; I have made thee desolate
14 because of thy sins. Thou shalt eat, but not be
satisfied; and thy humiliation shall be in the midst of
thee: and thou shalt remove, but shalt not carry away
safe; and that which thou carriest away will I give up to
15 the sword. Thou shalt sow, but shalt not reap: thou

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12. thereof: *sc.* of the city. Prof. G. A. Smith tries to get the feminine pronoun into verses 10, 11, that the 'thereof' may be more intelligible. The verses are much dislocated.

deceitful: the Hebrew word is found only in the Psalms.

13. a grievous wound: the word used by Nahum iii. 19 to Nineveh. A better rendering is Wellhausen's: 'And I for my part have begun to plague thee.'

thee is masculine here, perhaps the individual inhabitant of the city.

14. humiliation: better, 'emptiness' (cf. Lev. xxvi. 25, 26; Deut. xxviii. 39), a word only used here. But *jeshach* may be paralleled by the modern colloquial Arabic *waḥsha*, 'longing for an absent friend' (Prof. G. A. Smith). Pusey's interesting quotation from the Commentary of Arias Montanus on the Minor Prophets, date 1571, shows how exactly the conditions of the eighth century B.C. correspond to those of the sixteenth century A.D., and how little they differ from those of the twentieth century A.D.: 'Upon extreme but ill-gotten abundance there followeth extreme want. And whoso seeth not this in our ways and our times is absolutely blind. For in no period have we ever read that there was so much gold and silver, or so much discomfort and indigence, so that those most true words of Christ Jesus seem to have been especially spoken of us, *Take heed, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*'

thou shalt remove (the word used Deut. xix. 14, xxvii. 17; Hos. v. 10 for removing boundaries): unintelligible, says Wellhausen; evidently we must supply as an object persons, e.g. thy wife and children, because they are given to the sword.

The situation seems to be that of a besieged and starving town; cf. Lev. xxvi. 25; 2 Kings vi. 25; Jer. lii. 6. Jer. xliv. 12 is more explicit still.

15. The enemy takes Judah's harvest, Amos v. 11; cf. Lev.

shalt tread the olives, but shalt not anoint thee with oil; and the vintage, but shalt not drink the wine. For the 16 statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels: that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing; and ye shall bear the reproach of my people.

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xxvi. 16; Deut. xxviii. 30, 38, 41. For the oil obtained by treading the olives, see Deut. xxviii. 40.

> 'He weaves and is clothed with derision,
>   He sows and he shall not reap;
> His life is a watch and a vision
>   Between a sleep and a sleep' (Swinburne).

16. statutes of Omri: *sc.* the worship of Baal, 1 Kings xvi. 31, 32. Omri, the father of Ahab, and founder of a powerful dynasty in Samaria. How great he was appears from the Assyrian inscriptions, in which Jehu is described as the son of Omri and the Kingdom of Israel is called Bit Khumri, 'place of Omri.' Scripture speaks of the great potentate with contempt, 1 Kings xvi. 25. LXX oddly puts 'Zimri.' Statutes, in a religious sense (Lev. xx. 8; 2 Kings xvii. 34; Jer. x. 3).

are kept. Wellhausen alters into 'thou keepest,' and **ye walk** into 'thou walkest.' Then **make thee** is straightforward. But even so we have the awkward **thereof** again, referring to the city which had not been mentioned since verse 12.

works of . . . Ahab: the Baal cultus, but as Micah does not refer to this elsewhere, the phrase may mean the acts of violence and injustice with which the house of Ahab was full; cf. 1 Kings xxi. The punishment of Ahab's house became proverbial, 2 Kings ix. 30 ff. Omri and Ahab are the only kings of the Northern Kingdom mentioned in the prophetic books (Cheyne).

a desolation: cf. Jer. xix. 8, xxv. 9.

an hissing: cf. Jer. xxv. 18, li. 37.

my people: read, with LXX, 'the Gentiles,' as Ezek. xxxiv. 29, xxxvi. 6. If **my people** were correct we should have to give the clause the unnatural meaning: 'ye shall bear the reproach which will come upon my people as the reward of their sins,' and we must quote, with Pusey, Ps. xliv. 13–16, lxxix. 4; Jer. li. 51; Ezek. xxxvi. 20; Hos. ix. 3; Joel ii. 17, where this reproach is referred to.

The versions agree in giving a different text of the last clause, from which Roorda renders: 'And they that fear his name have heard wisdom. He hath declared who is he that stirreth up his

7 Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat; my soul desireth the firstripe
2 fig. The godly man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net.
3 Their hands are upon that which is evil to do it

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rod.' The sudden change to the second person plural is very perplexing, *sc.* the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

It is to be noted that there is nothing to fix the date of this passage, nor of that which follows.

vii. 1-6, in which Jerusalem, or the prophet, or the true Israel, the Israel within Israel (Cheyne), bemoans her corrupt society. This lamentable social condition may have existed in the eighth century B.C., but it is strangely like that in Zeph. iii. 1-7: cf. Ps. xii. 1, xiv. 1; Isa. lix; Mal. ii.

1. Jerusalem is desolate like a field from which the harvest has been carried, or a vine when the grapes have been gathered and there remain only a few, stunted or rotten, in the tops of the branches. It does not refer to exile or political downfall. The city is crowded and rich; but when the good have disappeared, or become like the mere wisps and gleanings of the harvest, the population is mere prickly stubble, or a barren fig-tree.

Woe is me! Job x. 15 is the only place where the word appears. If the speaker is the prophet, he identifies himself with, and speaks to (verse 4), the guilty city.

the firstripe fig. The first figs to ripen in June are sweeter than any others (Isa. xxviii. 4; Jer. xxiv. 2; Hos. ix. 10). It is permissible, as in the margin, to understand a relative, 'nor first-ripe fig which my soul desired.'

2. The godly man. The beautiful Hebrew word, *chasid*, means merciful, loyal, pious (Prov. xi. 17; applied even to God, Ps. cxlv. 17). He is the **cluster** which the prophet (or the ideal Zion) desired, and the **upright** is the firstripe fig. But he has perished, perhaps as in Isa. lvii. 1, a very close parallel, it may be, slain by the wicked.

earth: rather, 'land.'

men: *sc.* its inhabitants.

blood: the plural in the Hebrew means 'deeds of blood.'

hunt . . . with a net: Ps. xxxv. 7, lvii. 6, cxl. 5; Jer. v. 26. All Israelites were brethren, cf. Lev. xix. 18; Mal. ii. 10.

3. The text of the verse is corrupt, but the meaning is fairly clear.

diligently; the prince asketh, and the judge *is ready* for
a reward; and the great man, he uttereth the mischief
of his soul: thus they weave it together. The best of 4
them is as a brier: the most upright is *worse* than a thorn
hedge: the day of thy watchmen, even thy visitation, is
come; now shall be their perplexity. Trust ye not in 5
a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the

Their hands, &c. The words are literally 'on the evil both hands to do good.' Our R. V. is as probable a conjecture as any other.

the prince asketh, &c. Deut. xvi. 19 expressly forbids this. Cheyne supplies to 'asketh' something like this: 'the judge to shut his eyes.'

is ready: the predicate has perhaps dropped out, and should be 'judges.'

the mischief: cf. Prov. x. 3 for the word.

thus they weave it: this translation is a *tour de force.* The Hebrew words mean . . . 'he . . . and they twist it.' Probably, as Nowack suggests, a clause has fallen out after 'he,' which contained a noun, to which the 'it' refers. It may have been: 'he, *sc.* the great man, and the judge devise a mischief, and they together work it out.'

4. a brier. Probably the *solanum cordatum.* The best of the judges and princes, who should be a wall of defence to the people, is no better than a brier bush, or a thorn hedge bristling with self-importance and self-interest, scratching and tearing those it should protect. The comparison of bad men with thorns is quite natural, cf. 2 Sam. xxiii. 6. This is 'sharpness' or 'sharp-dealing,' the cunning which bristles in its own defence, but is barren of fruit and shelters no life (Prof. G. A. Smith).

worse **than.** As Nowack points out, the *mem* of comparison belongs to the previous word, and we must supply *che*, 'the most upright of them is as a thorn hedge.'

thy watchmen. The people is now addressed. The watchmen are the prophets, Isa. xxi. 6; Jer. vi. 17; Ezek. iii. 17, xxxiii. 7; Hab. ii. 1. The day is that foretold by the prophets.

thy visitation looks like a gloss inserted to explain what **the day of thy watchmen** meant.

now: as Amos vi. 7.

their: refers to the prince and the judge.

perplexity: so Isa. xxii. 5.

5. Social iniquity finally breaks the ties of friendship and the family. To admit selfishness at all is to contract a disease which

doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.
6 For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.

7 But as for me, I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

---

enters and slowly poisons the whole system. The progress of the disease would be better marked if we rendered: 'Trust ye not in a companion, put ye not confidence in a friend' (the true meaning of the word rendered **guide**), &c. The wife is the last of the series; the disease is at its height when even she betrays you.

6. dishonoureth: *lit.* treateth as a fool, Deut. xxxii. 15, rendered 'lightly esteemed'; Jer. xiv. 21; Nahum iii. 6.

the men of his own house: *sc.* the servants, Gen. xvii. 23, 27, xxxix. 14; 2 Sam. xii. 17; Job xix. 15. Our Lord used this language for quite another occasion (Matt. x. 35; Luke xii. 53).

The passage breaks off abruptly. 'Between verse 6 and verse 7,' says Wellhausen, 'yawns a century.' Pusey, following the A. V., tries to bring out a connexion between the passages. But vi. 9—vii. 6 refers to the state flourishing and wicked, vii. 7–20 refers to an exile which has actually come. The speaker may still be the Israel in Israel, with whom we meet in the second Isaiah.

vii. 7–20. This closing passage is a mingled cry of confession, prayer, and thanksgiving. The speaker is Israel; the mouthpiece is the prophet. It might be a cento of fragments, one from the days of the Syrian wars, one from the dread day of the fall of Jerusalem, others from the Exile. Which is Micah's, and which is the language of other prophets inserted later on, we cannot, nor need we, determine. It is one of those Divine passages in Scripture, the heart-throb, the spiritual intensity, the religious quality of which make it quite immaterial when or how they were produced. Enough that the Spirit of God is breathing in it, and eyes lit with smiles, and wet with tears, are lifted up to Him. The passage ranks with the wonderful second part of Isaiah.

7. look unto: rather, 'look for'; cf. Ps. xxvii. 8; Isa. xvii. 10.

will wait for: the Hebrew word is almost appropriated to this waiting for God and His mercies. Ps. xlii. 6, 12, xliii. 5, cxxx. 5 (translated 'hope for'); 2 Kings vi. 33; Lam. iii. 24, &c.

God of my salvation: this beautiful title is in Ps. xviii. 46, xxv. 5, xxvii. 9; Hab. iii. 18; and cf. Ps. xxiv. 5, lxii. 7, lxv. 5, lxxix. 9, lxxxv. 4, xcv. 1; Isa. xvii. 10.

Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I 8
shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be
a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the 9
LORD, because I have sinned against him; until he plead
my cause, and execute judgement for me: he will bring
me forth to the light, *and* I shall behold his righteousness.
Then mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover 10
her; which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God?
Mine eyes shall behold her; now shall she be trodden
down as the mire of the streets. A day for building thy 11

---

8. mine enemy: feminine collective; e. g. Babylon. For this malignant rejoicing cf. Ps. xxxv. 19, 24, xxxviii. 16; Obad. 12.

sit in darkness: Amos v. 18; Isa. ix. 1, xlii. 7, lx. 1; the light is Yahweh's promise, Ps. xxvii. 1. 'There is a bud of morning in midnight' (Keats).

9. The heathen were instruments of God in punishing Israel; but they overstep the mark when they think to destroy as well as to chastise, Isa. x. 5; Hab. i. 11.

I will bear the indignation: so all penitents feel, 1 Sam. iii. 18; 2 Sam. xvi. 10; Lam. iii. 29.

his righteousness: i. e. vindication; when Yahweh has entered into a covenant it is only right for Him to fulfil it.

10. enemy: as verse 8.

shame shall cover her: Obad. 10; Ezek. vii. 18.

Where is the LORD: the familiar gibe, Ps. lxxix. 10, cxv. 2; Joel ii. 17.

mire of the streets: Isa. x. 6.

vii. 11-13. Suddenly the prophet turns and addresses Israel (masculine, not feminine as before) who had been speaking; or of course it may be a fragment from another source introduced here. It sounds like a contemporary of Zech. x. 10. It points to a time after the Babylonian Exile, for the return is not from Babylon, but from widely scattered countries and regions.

11. A day for building: we seem suddenly transferred into the days of Nehemiah (Neh. i.; Ezek. iv. 7). The text is disturbed; and the meaning of the decree is very obscure (cf. Zeph. ii. 2). Cheyne says the **walls** are those of a vineyard, not of a city; cf. Isa. v. 5. Wellhausen and Prof. G. A. Smith follow the LXX in drawing the second **that day** into verse 11. Nowack gives up the clause about the decree as unintelligible,

12 walls! in that day shall the decree be far removed. In that day shall they come unto thee, from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt even to the River, and
13 from sea to sea, and *from* mountain to mountain. Yet shall the land be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings.

but Prof. G. A. Smith thinks *chôḳ* may mean 'border.' Thus we get:—

> 'A day for building thy walls is that day;
> Thy border shall be broader that day.' Cf. Isa. xxxiii. 17.

12. Some words must have fallen out. And to get any sense we must change two words, and we must correct the gender of **thee** to bring it into harmony with verse 11. Thus we get the sense: 'And to thee shall come (*sc.* the returning captivity) from Assyria and unto Egypt (*lit.* Strong-land)[1], and from Egypt and unto the River, and to sea from sea, and to mountain from mountain' (from Sinai in the south to Lebanon in the north (?), cf. Ps. lxxii. 8). The River in this case, though it is the word specially used for the Nile, must mean the Euphrates; and the whole paragraph describes the horizon of Palestine from Assyria on the north to Egypt on the south, from Mesopotamia east and the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean west (cf. Isa. xi. 11, xxvii. 13; Hos. xi. 11; Amos ix. 11).

We are carried into a time long after Nehemiah. Indeed, the prophecy remains yet unfulfilled in its literalness and its entirety, as Isa. xix. 23–25.

13. It is difficult to connect this verse naturally with the preceding[2], for there is no **Yet,** but simply 'And,' unless, with Wellhausen, we may take **the land** to be 'the earth,' viz. all the heathen world, with the exception of Israel (cf. Jer. xxxii. 20). To refer back to vi. 9—vii. 6 would be to rob vii. 7–12 of all its

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[1] Mazor, instead of Mizraim, the usual name of Egypt, as in Isa. xix. 6, xxxvii. 25.

[2] Pusey says: 'Yet it was all fulfilled in the letter as well as in spirit. Jerusalem was restored, the people was gathered, first from the Captivity, then to Christ; and yet the land was again desolate through the fruit of their doings, who rejected Christ, and is so until this day.' But it is one thing, by ignoring time and the distance of events, to find 'fulfilments' of obscure prophecies in the long range of history, and quite another to trace out the meaning of the prophet's oracles, as they appeared to him. The former method has its uses, and is justified by the manner in which the N. T. quotes from the Old; but the latter method is the only one which sober exegesis can attempt.

Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine 14
heritage, which dwell solitarily, in the forest in the midst
of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in
the days of old. As in the days of thy coming forth out 15
of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous
things. The nations shall see and be ashamed of all 16
their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth,

---

beautiful meaning. What use is the return from exile if the land is still to be desolate? But verse 13 may be a fragment from another connexion.

14. The prophet prays for his people to the Shepherd of Israel (cf. Gen. xlix. 24; Ps. xxiii. 1, lxxx. 1). The shepherd's staff (Lev. xxvii. 32; Ps. xxiii. 4) the prophet resigns to the great Shepherd.

dwell solitarily, in the forest. The word **Carmel** is better taken in its literal meaning, 'fruitful field' (as 2 Kings xix. 23; Isa. xxxvii. 24), and not as the mountain of that name. Then the phrase describes the forlorn condition of Israel at the time that the prayer was offered: 'that dwell solitarily in the wilderness in the midst of the fruit-field.' Nowack thinks it describes the people who returned from the Exile to find their fields in the possession of others. And he strengthens his argument by noting that the aspiration is to get back to Bashan and Gilead, *sc.* on the other side Jordan. If the standpoint were the Babylonian Exile, it would be the land west of Jordan which the people would desire to recover. Cheyne gives a curious meaning to **solitarily.** It refers, he thinks, to the condition of Israel's mission as a nation set apart, Num. xxiii. 9; Deut. xxxiii. 28. It is clear that **as in the days of old** would be quite unsuitable on Micah's lips; in his day Bashan and Gilead still belonged to Israel. To refer it to the days of David, with Cheyne, is strained, because it was not only in those golden days that the people dwelt in Bashan and Gilead. Everything points therefore to this prayer dating from the latest period of Israel's history, the days of Haggai and Zephaniah.

15. This verse should be a continuation of the prayer. Make the verb imperative: 'As in the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, show us wonders' (Exod. iii. 20, xv. 11; Ps. lxxviii. 11).

16. Such wonders would put the nations to shame again, as of old.

ashamed of: Hos. iv. 19.

hand upon their mouth: in astonishment or reverence, Judges xviii. 19; Job xxi. 5.

17 their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like
a serpent; like crawling things of the earth they shall
come trembling out of their close places: they shall
come with fear unto the LORD our God, and shall be
18 afraid because of thee. Who is a God like unto thee,
that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression
of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his
19 anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will
turn again and have compassion upon us; he will tread
our iniquities under foot: and thou wilt cast all their
20 sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the
truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which thou
hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

---

deaf: *sc.* with the thunder of His might, Job xxvi. 14; Isa. xxxiii. 3.

17. like a serpent: Gen. iii. 14; the sign of submission to Yahweh, Isa. xlix. 23.

close places: i. e. fastnesses; cf. Ps. xviii. 45.

vii. 18–20. A hymn of praise to the Lord who works such a deliverance: cf. Exod. xv. 1–18; Isa. xii. 1–6. For special phrases cf. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Ps. ciii. 9, cv. 9, 10; Isa. lvii. 16; Jer. iii. 5, l. 20; Joel ii. 13.

18. Who is . . . like: Exod. xv. 11. The name Micah means 'Who is like Yahweh?'

that pardoneth: Exod. xxxiv. 7.

passeth by: Prov. xix. 11.

19. will turn again: Hos. xiv. 8.

tread . . . under foot: as something worthless which is not to be thought of again.

their sins: read, 'our sins,' so LXX, Pesh., Vulg.

depths of the sea: like Exod. xv. 5, 10.

20. truth and **mercy:** the substance of the promises Exod. xxxiv. 6; Num. xxv. 12.

Jacob and **Abraham:** for the people who are their descendants cf. Isa. xli. 8.

hast sworn: as in Gen. xxii. 16. There is not room therefore, with Cheyne, to see here the belief that the Fathers, Abraham and Jacob, still live unto God. That belief had to wait for our Lord's authoritative teaching, Luke xvi. 25-31; John viii. 56.

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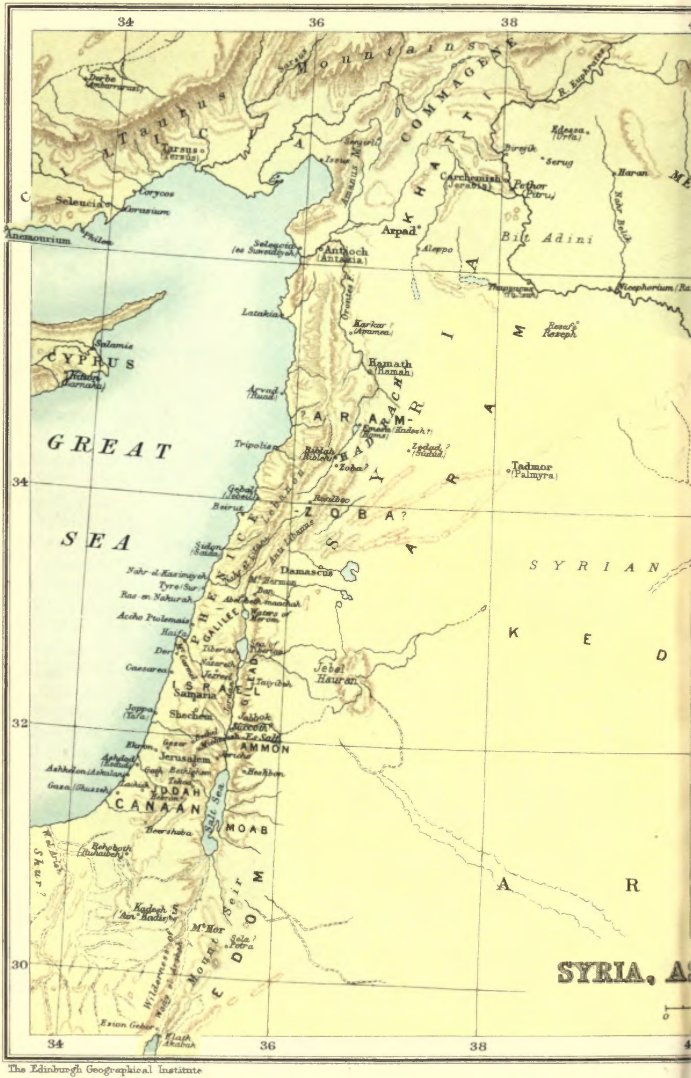
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(Ruad)
ARAM-HADRACH
ARAM
Emesa
(Homs)
(Kadesh?)
GREAT
SEA
Tripolis
Riblah
(Ribleh)
Zoba?
Zedad?
(Sudud)
Tadmor
(Palmyra)
SYRIA
Gebal
(Jebeil)
Beirut
Baalbec
ZOBA?
Lebanon
Anti Libanus
PHOENICIA
Sidon
(Saida)
Damascus
SYRIAN
Nahr el-Kasimiyeh
Tyre (Sur)
Ras en Nakurah
Acco Ptolemais
Haifa
Dor
Mt. Carmel
Caesarea
Mt. Hermon
Dan
Abel-beth-maachah
Waters of Merom
GALILEE
Tiberias
Sea of Tiberias
Nazareth
Jezreel
ISRAEL
Samaria
Jordan
GILEAD
Taiyibeh
Jebel Hauran
KEDAR
Joppa
(Yafa)
Shechem
Jabbok
Succoth
Es Salt
Bethel
Mizpah
AMMON
Ekron
Gezer
Ashdod
(Esdud)
Jerusalem
Jericho
Ashkelon (Askalan)
Gath
Bethlehem
Tekoa
Heshbon
Gaza (Ghuzzeh)
Lachish
JUDAH
Hebron
CANAAN
Salt Sea
MOAB
Beersheba
Wel Arish
Shur?
Rehoboth
(Ruhaibeh)
Kadesh
('Ain Kadis)
Wilderness of Zin
Mount Seir
EDOM
Mt. Hor
Sela?
Petra
Wady el Arabah
Ezion Geber
Elath
Akabah
ARABIA
SYRIA, AS
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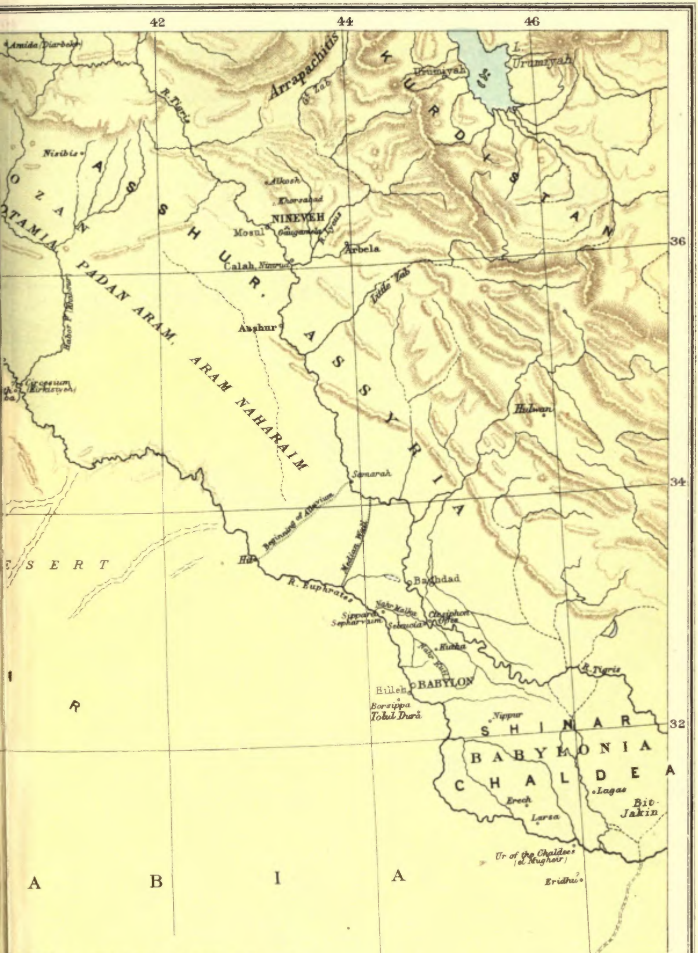
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OZAN
OTAMIA
PADAN ARAM, ARAM NAHARAIM
Alkosh
Khorsabad
NINEVEH
Mosul
Gaugamela
R. Lycus
Arbela
Calah, Nimrud
Little Zab
Habor R. (Khabour)
Asshur
Circesium (Kirkisiyeh)
Holwan
Samarah
Beginning of Alluvium
Median Wall
Hit
ESERT
R. Euphrates
Baghdad
Nahr Malka
Sippara
Sepharvaim
Seleucia
Ctesiphon
Opis
Kutha
Nahr Kutha
R. Tigris
Hilleh
BABYLON
Borsippa
Tolul Durâ
Nippur
SHINAR
BABYLONIA
CHALDEA
Lagas
Erech
Larsa
Bit-Jakin
Ur of the Chaldees (el Mugheir)
Eridhu?
R
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The Century Bible

A MODERN COMMENTARY

The Minor Prophets

Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah
Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

INTRODUCTIONS
REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES
ILLUSTRATIONS

EDITED BY

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PREFACE

THE aim of the present Commentary is to explain the prophets, whose writings it embraces, in the light of history, to make their words intelligible to modern readers, so far as our knowledge enables us to do so, in the sense which they conveyed to those who first heard or read them. This I understand to be the primary duty of a Commentary on the poetical or prophetical writings of the Old Testament, and to be the intention of the volumes in the present series. The gifted men of old who spake, 'being borne along by the Holy Ghost,' were, each and all, the children of their own times: each had his own distinctive individuality, but each, as he spoke or wrote, had his eye steadily fixed on the questions of national interest prominent at the time, on the social, moral, or religious needs of his fellow countrymen, on contemporary political movements in the world outside; each either judged the present, or looked out into the future, from the standpoint of his own age. Neither the prophets' judgements on their contemporaries, nor the great ideals which they project upon the future, can be rightly understood without reference to the influences under which they wrote, the moral and spiritual atmosphere in which they lived, the practical questions with which they had to deal: and hence the extreme importance of ascertaining, as fully as is possible, the historical conditions under which each prophecy was delivered, and which,—saving, of course, the individuality of the author,—determined essentially its character and scope. I have accordingly made it my endeavour to bring out the distinctive historical position and significance of each of the prophets with whom, in the present volume, I have had to deal. Of course, at the same time, the writings of the prophets abound in elements of permanent value: the great principles of religion and morality which they proclaim, and which they also make the basis of their ideals, are applicable to all time. Where occasion required it, I hope that I have not been neglectful in calling attention to this aspect of the prophets' writings; but homiletical or devotional reflections, not strictly contained in the prophets' words, but only suggested by them, or capable of being developed out of them, I considered to lie beyond the scope of this Commentary. For these, references must be made to the larger Commentaries of Dr. Pusey and Professor G. A. Smith. The former of these, a work of monumental erudition, not only contains many valuable notes on questions of Hebrew philology and other departments of learned research, but abounds especially in devotional and homiletical expansions of the prophets' thought, partly the ripened fruit of the venerable author's own long spiritual experience, partly collected by him, with his wonted learning and industry, from the stores accumulated by the piety of older divines. Professor Smith's work, which is written from a more modern point of view, while doing full justice to the claims of critical and historical exegesis, displays warm sympathy with the prophets' spirit, and contains many fresh and suggestive applications adapted to the circumstances of the present day. The two most recent exegetical Commentaries on the Minor Prophets, to both of which I must acknowledge my obligations, are those by Nowack and Marti; and the reader who desires further information upon difficult points of criticism and exegesis must, in addition to Professor Smith's volumes, consult these, without at the same time forgetting the older, but still very often useful, Commentary of C. F. Keil. Wellhausen's *Die kleinen Propheten*, though not a complete Commentary, is marked by its author's usual insight and cleverness, and is a valuable contribution to the exegesis of the Minor Prophets. On Zechariah also, Dr. C. H. H. Wright's *Zechariah and his Prophecies* (the 'Bampton Lectures' for 1878), with critical and grammatical notes, may often be serviceably consulted.

The scale of the present Commentary has precluded, as a rule, a detailed discussion of difficult or controverted points, whether of criticism or exegesis: I have, however, wherever possible, endeavoured to give the reader an indication of the grounds for the conclusions adopted. The Revised Version, superior as it is in clearness and accuracy to the Authorized Version, and though sufficient as a rule for ordinary purposes, not unfrequently contains passages in which the sense of the original might be more closely expressed: in such cases, where it seemed to be of sufficient importance to do so, I have naturally given the more exact rendering in the notes. In places where the catch-words (in heavy type) at the beginning of a note differ from the text of the Revised Version, the variation is intentional, and is designed for the purpose of expressing the force of the Hebrew more exactly. From time to time I have also introduced Hebrew words into the notes—though not, I hope, in such a way as to make the notes less easy for an ordinary reader to understand—partly for the benefit of such readers as may be students of Hebrew, and partly, in the case of emendations, in order that even those unacquainted with Hebrew may see for themselves how slight in many cases the textual change involved is.

The reader who desires to understand the Revised Version must not forget that it has inherited from the Authorized Version many archaisms, or words used in now obsolete or unfamiliar senses, which, unless he happens to be an expert in Old English, will either convey no definite meaning to him, or else mislead him by suggesting an incorrect meaning. In the books included in the present volume there are nearly forty such expressions,—*alarm*, *base*, *brass*, *cieled*, *coast*, *discover*, *fair*, *meat*, *table*, *vile* may be instanced, all used in senses now practically unknown. I have made it a point to explain these words to the reader, and have also collected them all in the Index[1].

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[1] The standard work on archaic words and phrases in the English Bible and Prayer Book is Aldis Wright's *Bible Word-Book* (ed. 2, 1884), with numerous illustrations from old

Difficulties and obscurities arise sometimes in the prophets from our imperfect knowledge of the incidents and circumstances alluded to: but they are due more frequently to corruption of the text. From internal evidence it is clear that there are many passages in the Old Testament in which the Hebrew text has not been transmitted to us intact: in such cases it can be sometimes restored, with moral certainty, from the ancient Versions (which represent MSS. many centuries older than the oldest Hebrew MSS. which we possess), sometimes, either with equal moral certainty or with great probability, by conjecture; sometimes, on the other hand, a certain or convincing restoration appears to be impossible. The margins of the Revised Version note a limited number of readings from the ancient Versions, which in most cases are unquestionably to be regarded as more original than those of the present Hebrew text; but it did not fall within the scope of the Revisers' work to notice more than some of the clearest and most important cases. In the opinion of the best modern Hebrew scholars there are numerous other passages in which the Hebrew text both needs emendation, and can, with very great probability, be emended, whether from the ancient Versions or by conjecture. I have naturally mentioned in the notes such emendations, belonging to either of these classes, as seemed to me to be worthy of adoption, or at least,

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writers. See also the respective words in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, where also they are usually fully illustrated and explained.

in a few cases, to be probable enough to deserve consideration. Here also I have made it my endeavour to state the facts in such a way that the necessity, or probability, of the proposed emendation may be apparent to the reader. But the extensive alterations of text, and rejection of passages as later insertions, assumed by some modern scholars, partly on the ground of imperfect agreement with the context, partly on account of the supposed exigencies of metre, appear to me to rest upon an insufficient basis. It seems to me far from clear that the Hebrew prophets, most of whom were also poets, and evidently men swayed often by emotion, are to be regarded as necessarily developing their thought with exact logical precision; so that,—to say nothing of the possibility that their discourses may have come down to us in a condensed form, with connecting links omitted,—imperfect agreement with the context appears to me, except in extreme cases, to be a questionable ground for suspecting the originality of a passage. And though the question of ancient Hebrew metre is an interesting one, and well worthy of the attention which has been recently paid to it, it surely deserves serious consideration whether a metrical system which, in order to be carried through, necessitates constant and often considerable changes in the text, can be reasonably regarded as the system actually followed by the Hebrew poets. Of course there can be no doubt that the prophets show a great tendency to throw their discourses into a rhythmical succession of parallel clauses, of approximately the same length, and often, in the same context, of approximately the same structure,—of three, four, or five accented syllables, for instance: the question is whether what seems to be the prevailing measure in a given context was adhered to with such rigidity that whatever does not conform to it in our present text must be altered or excised[1].

The *margins* of the Revised Version are an integral and important part of the Revisers' work; and, except where they merely repeat the discarded renderings of the Authorized Version, nearly always contain renderings, or readings, superior to those adopted in the text. Hence they deserve careful attention on the part of any one using the version; for those which, in the estimation of the best scholars, are preferable to the renderings of the text, ought, as a matter of course, to be substituted for the latter, when the Revised Version is read, whether privately or in public. Many readers, however, are probably often at a loss to know whether the rendering of the text or of the margin deserves the preference. The following practical method is strongly recommended. Whatever book is being read, in every case in which an alternative rendering, or reading, is mentioned, ascertain from a good commentary which is to be preferred; and if the margin is to be preferred, draw a line against it for future use: when the passage is read or referred to again, the advantage of having thus noted beforehand the rendering to be preferred will soon be apparent. Naturally, a few difficult or ambiguous passages will remain in which a decision may be difficult or impossible. In the present volume I have been careful, as far as was possible, to indicate the renderings to be preferred. May I in conclusion invite the reader's attention to what I have said more fully on the importance of the margins of the Revised Version in the Introduction to my recently published *Book of Job in the Revised Version with Introductions and brief Annotations* (Oxford, 1906), pp. xxiv–xxxiii?

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[1] See further on the question of the metrical form of ancient Hebrew poetry, Budde's art. 'POETRY (HEBREW)' in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*; and W. F. Cobb, *A Criticism of Systems of Hebrew Metre* (Oxford, 1905).

S. R. DRIVER.

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.
February 24, 1906.

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MAP

SYRIA, ASSYRIA, AND BABYLONIA

PRINCIPAL ABBREVIATIONS EMPLOYED

Aq.	Aquila (Greek translator of the O.T., of the 2nd cent. A. D.[1]).
AVm.	Margin of the Authorized Version.
Bertholet	*Die Bücher Esra u. Nehemia*, 1902 (in Marti's 'Hand-Commentar zum A.T.').
Dav.	A. B. Davidson, *Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah*, 1896 (in the 'Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges').
DB.	Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*
EB.	*Encyclopaedia Biblica.*
EVV.	English Versions (used in quoting passages in which AV. and RV. agree).
Ewald	*Die Propheten des alten Bundes*, ed. 2, 1868 (translated).
G.-K.	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar as enlarged and edited by E. Kautzsch* (translated by Collins and Cowley, 1898).
Halévy	J. Halévy, translation of Nahum and Zephaniah, with notes, in the *Revue Sémitique*, 1905.
Hitz., Hi.	F. Hitzig, *Die zwölf kleinen Propheten*, ed. 2, 1863; ed. 3, revised by H. Steiner, 1881.
Jer.	Jerome (346-420 A.D. Author of Commentary on the Prophets, and translator of the 'Vulgate').
KAT.^{3}	*Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, ed. 3 (1902), by H. Zimmern and H. Winckler.
Keil	C. F. Keil, *Biblischer Commentar über die zwölf kleinen Propheten*, ed. 3, 1888.
Kirkp., Kp.	A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Doctrine of the Prophets.*
Lex.	Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the O.T.*
LOT.	S. R. Driver, *Introd. to the Lit. of the O.T.*
KB.	*Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* (transliterations and translations of Assyrian and Babylonian texts, edited by Eb. Schrader).
Marti	K. Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton erklärt* (1904).

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[1] Such remains of his translation as have been preserved, together with those of Symmachus and Theodotion, are collected mostly in Field's edition of Origen's *Hexapla* (1875).

Meyer	Ed. Meyer, *Die Entstehung des Judenthums* (1896).
,, (p. 282)	H. A. W. Meyer, *Commentary on St. Matthew.*
NHB.	H. B. Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible.*
Now.	W. Nowack, *Die kleinen Propheten übersetzt u. erklärt* (ed. 2, 1905).
P	The Priestly sections of the Pentateuch.
Parallel Psalter.	S. R. Driver, *The Parallel Psalter, being the Prayer-Book Version of the Psalms, and a new Version, arranged on opposite pages, with an Introduction and Glossaries,* ed. 2, 1905.
Pesh.	Peshiṭto (Syriac version of the O.T. Probably of the 2nd cent. A.D.).
PRE^3.	*Protestantische Real-Encyklopädie,* ed. 3 (ed. by Hauck).
Pusey	E. B. Pusey, *The Minor Prophets, with a Commentary explanatory and practical.*
RVm.	Margin of the Revised Version.
Smith	G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets* (in the 'Expositor's Bible'), vol. 2 (1898).
Symm.	Symmachus (Greek translator of the O.T., of the 2nd cent. A.D.).
Targ.	Targum (ancient Aramaic paraphrase of the Prophets).
Theod.	Theodotion (Greek translator of the O.T., of the 2nd cent. A.D.).
Wellh., We.	J. Wellhausen, *Die kleinen Propheten übersetzt u. erklärt* (ed. 3, 1898).
Wright	C. H. H. Wright, *Zechariah and his Prophecies* (1879). (The 'Bampton Lectures' for 1878.)

In citations, the letters ^{a} and ^{b} denote respectively the first and second parts of the verse cited. Where a verse consists of three or four clauses (or lines), the letters ^{a}, ^{b}, ^{c}, ^{d} are sometimes used similarly to denote them.

Letters with dots under them (as *ḥ*, *ḳ*, *ṭ*, *ẓ*), as also ʾ and ʿ, are used, where it seemed worth while to do so, for the purpose of distinguishing certain Hebrew letters; but they have not been employed consistently, and particularly not in the case of familiar proper names.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

B.C.
705. Sennacherib.
698. MANASSEH.
681. Esarhaddon.
670. Esarhaddon conquers Egypt.
668–625. Asshurbanipal.
663. No (Thebes) taken by Asshurbanipal.
641. AMON.
639. JOSIAH.
c. 630. Irruption of Scythians into Western Asia.
625. Nabopolassar viceroy in Babylon.
c. 625. *Zephaniah.*
624. First siege of Nineveh by Nabopolassar. ? *Nahum.*
621. Discovery of Deuteronomy. 620. Josiah's reform.
c. 612. Babylon declared independent by Nabopolassar.
608. Death of Josiah at Megiddo.
608. JEHOAHAZ (3 months).
608. JEHOIAKIM.
607. Destruction of Nineveh. ? *Nahum.*
605. Pharaoh Neco defeated at Carchemish by Nebuchadnezzar.
605–561. Nebuchadnezzar. 605–600. *Habakkuk.*
597. JEHOIACHIN (3 months).
597. ZEDEKIAH.
586. Destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldaeans.
538. Babylon taken by Cyrus.
537. 42,366 exiles (besides slaves) return under Zerubbabel.
536. Foundation of Temple formally laid.
529. Cambyses. 522. Gaumâta (usurper, for 7 months).
522. Darius Hystaspis.
520. Building of Temple begun. *Haggai. Zechariah i–vi.*
518. *Zechariah vii–viii.*
520. Temple completed.
458. About 1,750 exiles return under Ezra.
c. 460–50. *Malachi.*
445. Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem.
444. Book of the Law accepted by the people.
432. Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem.
333. Persian empire overthrown by Alexander the Great.
332. Alexander's seven months' siege of Tyre. ? *Zech. ix–x.*
323. Death of Alexander at Babylon.
323–*c.* 300. Wars of his generals and successors. ? *Zech. ix–xiv.*
302–198. Palestine under the rule of the Ptolemies.
198. Antiochus the Great obtains possession of Palestine.
175–164. Antiochus Epiphanes.

NAHUM

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

NAHUM

INTRODUCTION

§ I. The Person of Nahum.

Respecting the person of Nahum nothing is known beyond the statement in the title (i. 1) that he was an *Elkoshite*, i.e. an inhabitant of a place *Elkosh*. A village bearing the name of *Alkush*, containing a tomb which is shown as that of Nahum, exists at the present day about twenty-four miles north of Kouyunjik (the ancient Nineveh)[1]; but the tradition connecting this locality with the prophet cannot be traced back beyond the sixteenth century; and in all probability it arose simply from the similarity of the name to that of the prophet's native place, coupled with the fact that he prophesied against Nineveh. Another and more ancient tradition places Elkosh in Galilee. Jerome, in the preface to his Commentary on Nahum, says that there was a small village in Galilee called Elkese showing hardly any traces of ancient buildings, but nevertheless known to the Jews, and pointed out to him by his guide ('et mihi quoque a circumducente monstratus'). But though it is of course possible for a prophet of Nahum's time to have lived in Galilee, it is not very probable. A third tradition makes Nahum a native of Judah. In a book *On the Lives of the Prophets*, attributed (doubtfully) to Epiphanius, a native of

---

[1] See Layard's *Nineveh and its Remains*, i. 233, and Map. The 'tomb' is a 'simple plaster box covered with green cloth, and standing at the upper end of a large chamber,' in a house of modern building. The place is 'held in great reverence by Mohammedans and Christians, but especially by Jews, who flock there in great numbers at certain seasons of the year.'

Besanduke, a village in the south-west of Judah, and subsequently (A.D. 367) bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, it is said of Nahum that he was 'from Elḳosh, beyond Bêth-gabrê, of the tribe of Simeon[1].' Bêth-gabrê is the place now called *Beit-Jibrîn*, the ancient Eleutheropolis, about twenty miles S.W. of Jerusalem; and 'beyond' means presumably S. or S.W. of Beit-Jibrîn. This tradition is decidedly more probable than either of the former ones: Nahum's interests are in Judah, and a prophet of Nahum's time is much more likely to have sprung from Judah than from Galilee: but no place, *Elḳosh*, is at present known in the required direction. There is, however, a well called *Bir el-Ḳaus* about six miles E. of Beit-jibrîn; whether this be the place referred to must be left undetermined[2].

§ 2. HISTORY OF NAHUM'S TIME.

The prophecy of Nahum is devoted to a single theme: it is a cry of exultation over the impending fall of Nineveh,—and with it, of course, of the Assyrian empire, of which Nineveh was the capital. A brief outline of the history of Assyria during the past century will explain why there should be this exultation at the prospect of her fall. In the days of Hezekiah, Judah had suffered much at the hands of the Assyrians. After years of tribute, Hezekiah had at length revolted; the sequel was the expedition of Sennacherib in 701 B.C., when the country was overrun by the Assyrian troops, forty-six of the cities of Judah captured by the enemy, and Jerusalem itself only rescued from destruction by a pestilence which so crippled the army of the Assyrian king as to oblige him to return home without delay. Sennacherib's death, by the hand of his sons, took place in 681. His successor, Esarhaddon (681–668), after various other successes, in 676 besieged and took the Phoenician city of Sidon, carrying off to Nineveh much treasure. Shortly afterwards, being about to build a new palace, he tells us how he summoned before him 'twenty-two kings of the land Ḥatti (the Hittite land, but used in Assyrian at this time in a wider sense, so as to include Phoenicia and Palestine), who dwelt by the sea and in the midst of the sea,' and commanded them to furnish him with materials for the purpose. The list of kings thus summoned by him is headed by Baal king of Tyre, and *Manasseh king of Judah*, and includes the kings of Edom, Moab, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Cyprus. Esarhaddon next, in 670, made a move to conquer Egypt, which was now under the rule of Tirhakah (Is. xxxvii. 9=2 K. xix. 9), the third king[1] of the twenty-fifth (Ethiopian) dynasty. He advanced as far as Memphis, which quickly fell into his hands: he then proceeded to organize the country into an Assyrian province, installing twenty-two native dependent rulers over the twenty-two 'nomes,' or administrative districts, into which it was already divided. After conducting expeditions into Media, Urartu (the 'Ararat' of the Bible), and elsewhere, he died in 668, while on his way to Egypt to quell a revolt which had broken out there.

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[1] On the reading of this passage see the article 'Nahum' in *DB.* iii. 474ᵃ.

[2] A *Simeonite* Elkosh, so far as inferences can be drawn from the largely unidentified places enumerated in Josh. xix. 2–8, would naturally be looked for considerably to the S. of Beit-Jibrîn. See further, on this subject, G. A. Smith, ii. 79–81; and Budde's article 'Elkoshite' in *EB.*

Esarhaddon, before his death, had nominated Asshurbanipal his successor on the throne of Assyria, but appointed another son, Shamash-shum-ukin, to be viceroy of Babylon under Asshurbanipal. Asshurbanipal's first step was to proceed with the expedition against Egypt, which Esarhaddon had begun. On his way he received the homage of twenty-two tributary kings,—

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[1] B. C. 694–668,—called 'king' of Ethiopia in the passages quoted (which relate to B. C. 701) by anticipation.

mostly the same as those mentioned by Esarhaddon,—who also, he adds, accompanied him with forces and ships. Tirhakah advanced to meet him as far as Memphis, but retreated at his approach to No (Thebes), the capital of Upper Egypt: both cities were entered by Asshurbanipal, the governors appointed by Esarhaddon were reinstated, and the authority of Assyria was re-established throughout the country. After Asshurbanipal's return home, however, the revolt in Egypt broke out again, under Turdamani (Urd-amani), Tirhakah's step-son; and the Assyrian king had to hasten back in order to suppress it (663). Turdamani, being obliged to evacuate Memphis, retreated, like his father, to No, whither Asshurbanipal pursued him:—

> He saw the approach of my mighty battle, abandoned No, and fled to Kipkip. This city (No) in its entire compass, in reliance upon Asshur and Ishtar, my hands conquered. Silver, gold, precious stones, the treasure of his palace, the whole that was there, richly-woven garments, fine horses, men and women, two lofty obelisks, 2,500 talents in weight, which stood before the gate of the temple, I removed from their place, and brought them to Assyria. Abundant spoil, beyond reckoning, I carried away out of No. Over Egypt and Cush (Ethiopia) I let my weapons gleam, and I established my might. With full hand I returned in safety to Nineveh, the city of my sovereignty.

This capture of the ancient and splendid capital of Upper Egypt by the Assyrians is alluded to by Nahum (iii. 8–10), in terms which show the profound impression that it left upon men's memories.

After his successes in Egypt, Asshurbanipal received the submission, accompanied by rich presents, of Baal, king of Tyre, and other princes of Syria and Asia Minor. Then, after a successful invasion of Man (the Minni of Jer. li. 27, near the modern Armenia), Asshurbanipal found himself obliged to send an expedition into Elam (Gen. x. 22), a country on the E. of the Tigris, inhabited by a powerful and well-organized people, where one Teumman had recently usurped the throne. In connexion with this expedition an interesting fact which throws light on Assyrian prophecy is related. On the eve of the campaign, Asshurbanipal prayed solemnly to the goddess Ishtar, who to encourage him appeared in a vision to a seer, and promised victory to the Assyrian arms. Confident of success, Asshurbanipal set out for Elam, and pressed on up to the walls of its capital, Susa. Here, on the banks of the Eulaeus (the Ulai of Dan. viii. 2), there was a decisive battle, in which the Elamites were utterly routed:—

> The land of Elam through its extent I covered, as when a mighty storm approaches. I cut off the head of Teumman, their king, the rebel who had plotted evil. Beyond number I slew his warriors; alive in my hands I took his fighting men; with their corpses as with thorns and thistles I filled the vicinity of Susa; their blood I caused to flow in the Eulaeus; its waters I stained like wool[1].

After this defeat, there was a temporary settlement in Elam: but before long disturbances broke out again, and another campaign was found necessary by Asshurbanipal. After capturing many cities, and ravaging the country on his march, Asshurbanipal at last besieged and took Susa. Then began 'a work of pillage which it would be difficult to parallel in all the earlier Assyrian records. From the treasuries were brought forth the gold and silver which the kings of Elam had plundered in raids into Babylonia and elsewhere. Precious stones and costly woollen stuffs, chariots and waggons, horses and animals of various kinds were sent away to Assyria;' Susa itself was razed to the ground; temples were broken into, sacred groves cut down, sepulchres violated; the whole country was left a waste; and the conqueror boasts that 'the voice of men, the tread of cattle and sheep, and the sound of happy music,' were no longer to be heard in it[2].

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[1] King in *EB.* i. 374; more fully Maspero, *Passing of the Empires*, pp. 404 ff.

[2] King in *EB.* i. 375; *KB.* ii. 209.

The above is, of course, a very summary account of Asshurbanipal's principal military achievements[1]: but it will suffice, perhaps, to give the reader a general idea of their character and magnitude. The Assyrians were masters in the art of war; and we can judge from the descriptions of Asshurbanipal with what terrible effect they launched themselves against their weaker neighbours. Almost every year a campaign against some tribe or people was being organized; and, even allowing for some rhetorical embellishment in their reports, one and all were equally helpless before them (cf. the striking comparison in Is. x. 14), they trod down the nations like dust, spread ruin and carnage through their lands, plundered their treasures, treated prisoners with savagery, and the dead with ignominy. Asshurbanipal in particular was guilty of great barbarity towards the vanquished: captive prisoners were shut up in cages and exposed to the gaze of the populace, or compelled to carry in a procession the heads of such as had been executed, while others were flayed alive[2]. We see also with what an iron hand the Assyrians interposed in the political affairs of their neighbours, 'removing the bounds of the peoples' (Is. x. 13), setting up or deposing kings, appointing governors at their will, or exacting tribute. Such a cruel and tyrannical power could not but be viewed with the intensest hatred by every nation which knew of it; and though Judah, so far as appears, had suffered less from the Assyrians during Nahum's lifetime than many other nations, yet the Hebrew prophet would know of course by report how other countries had been treated by them; and, we may feel assured, he does nothing more than 'utter the undoubted feeling of the whole western world, when in speaking of the ruin of Assyria he says, "All that hear the bruit of thee clap the hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?"'[1]

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[1] The Inscriptions of Asshurbanipal fill some seventy-five pages in *KB.* ii. (pp. 121 ff.), and his campaigns are described with much fullness and graphic detail (cf. Maspero, *Passing of the Empires*, pp. 381–442).

[2] Maspero, pp. 410, 413, 415, 423, 431, 438 f., &c. The brutality of Asshurbanipal is further illustrated by a bas-relief which represents him and his queen feasting in their garden with the head of Teumman hanging from a tree above them (cf. ibid. p. 412).

After Asshurbanipal, in spite of the external brilliance of his reign, the power of Assyria rapidly declined. The Assyrians had no genius, such as the Romans possessed, of civilizing conquered provinces or of constituting them parts of an organized empire; no high moral ideal inspired and braced them; their authority was maintained purely by the sword, and as soon as there was no strong hand to wield the sword, they speedily fell a prey to jealous or ambitious neighbours, and their empire broke up. Asshurbanipal was succeeded by Asshur-etil-ilāni (626-*c.* 620), and Asshur-etil-ilāni by Sin-shar-ishkun, the Saracos of the Greeks (*c.* 620-607); but both these seem to have been feeble rulers, and only three or four very brief and meagre inscriptions from their reigns have come down to us. Babylon at this time was under the rule of Nabopolassar (625-605), a Chaldaean (see on Hab. i. 6), father of the better known Nebuchadnezzar. At first Nabopolassar seems to have been viceroy of Babylon under Asshurbanipal and Asshur-etil-ilāni; but an irruption of tribes from the S. having taken place, probably in 612 or 611, being ordered by his suzerain Sin-shar-ishkun to take the field against them, instead of obeying the summons, he joined forces with the rebels, and declared the independence of Babylon[2]. The precise course of events which terminated ultimately in the destruction of Nineveh is not perfectly clear; but for our present purpose the uncertainty is immaterial. According to Herodotus (i. 102–104), the Medes, whose home was in the mountains between Nineveh and the Caspian Sea, had made an irruption into Assyria (*c.* 635 B.C.), which proved fatal both to their king Phraortes and to the greater part of his army; and a second invasion followed under Cyaxares, the son and successor of Phraortes, who, Herodotus says, even began the siege of Nineveh (*c.* 624), but was compelled to raise it, owing to his own country being invaded from the N.W. by Scythians. After the retreat of the Scythians from Asia, some years afterwards, he renewed the attack, and then took Nineveh (Hdt. i. 106). Some further particulars of the final close of the Assyrian empire are given in an inscription of Nabuna'id (Nabonidus), the last native king of Babylon (B.C. 555–538), found in 1895 at Hillah (Babylon)[1]. It would seem from this inscription that about 609 the Assyrian king, Sin-shar-ishkun, invaded Babylonia for the purpose of recovering his supremacy over it, and that Nabopolassar called in to assist him the Umman-manda, or 'hordes' of northern peoples, who are mentioned several times in the inscriptions as invading Assyria, and who were always ready for an excuse for doing so again. In Nabuna'id's own words, Marduk (Merodach, the supreme god of Babylon) summoned to his aid 'the king of the Umman-manda[2],' who thereupon 'above and below, right and left, overwhelmed the land like a deluge,' destroying all the temples, and laying waste the cities. Nineveh is not expressly mentioned, any more than any other city is, but it cannot be doubted that it is included. More specific particulars respecting its fate are wanting; but the fact remains that in or about the year 607 B. C.[1] Nineveh was destroyed; her imposing fortifications (cf. p. 32) were powerless to save her: the palaces and other buildings, constructed mostly, except on the outside, of unburnt bricks, when once rifts had been made in them, quickly dissolved in the rains, and became masses of soft clay, which gradually shaped themselves into huge grass-covered mounds; so that when two centuries afterwards (B.C. 401) Xenophon led home the remnant of the 10,000 Greeks, and passed by the spot, all that he knew was that a great and impregnable city had once stood there, but 'Zeus made its inhabitants senseless, and so it was taken.' It was reserved for the explorers of the last century, especially Botta, Layard, and Rassam[2], to penetrate into those mounds, and to exhume from them the still vocal monuments of the art, and literature, and history, and civilization of an empire which for more than five centuries had dominated the fortunes of the greater part of Western Asia, and which also, beyond perhaps anything else, had given occasion to the prophets of Israel for some of their greatest utterances[3].

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[1] Rogers, *Hist. of Bab. and Ass.* (1900), ii. 289.

[2] Cf. Maspero, *Passing of the Empires*, p. 482 f.; Rogers, ii. 307-9.

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[1] See Messerschmidt, *Die Inschrift der Stele Nabuna'id's* (1896).

[2] I. e., if we combine this account with that of Herodotus, Cyaxares. According to Herodotus, the *Medes* were the destroyers of Nineveh; but 'Umman-manda' is a vague and general term, and must be understood as including the Medes (Messerschmidt, p. 71; Maspero, p. 484).

§ 3. CONTENTS AND OCCASION OF NAHUM'S PROPHECY.

Chap. i. is introductory. It begins by declaring the character of Yahweh as 'a jealous and avenging God;' and then passes on to describe, in impressive imagery, the effect upon the world of nature, when He appears for judgement (*vv.* 2–6): Yahweh is good indeed to those who trust in Him, but upon His enemies, the unrighteous oppressors of His people, He pours forth His wrath, and Assyria He will utterly destroy (*vv.* 7–15)[1].

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[1] The date is fixed (within a year or two) by a passage in col. x of the Inscription, in which Nabuna'id says that the temple of Sin (the moon-god) in Ḥarran (the Biblical Ḥaran) was destroyed by the Umman-manda fifty-four years before he restored it, in his third year (*KB.* ii. 2, 99), i. e. in 552.

[2] Asshurbanipal was a patron of literature; and Rassam discovered in particular, in 1853, the library founded by him at Nineveh, which has furnished modern scholars with some of the most valuable monuments of Babylonian and Assyrian literature which they possess.

[3] Cf. Wellhausen, *Hist. of Isr.*, p. 472 f.; and the fine and instructive chapter in G. A. Smith's *The Twelve Prophets*, i. 44 ff.

Chap. ii. A vivid imaginative description of the capture and sack of Nineveh. The prophet depicts in rapid succession the approach of the assailants, the preparations for the attack, the charging of the chariots, the opening of the gates, the flight of the population, the treasures plundered by the captors, the city which had hitherto been the home of fearless and ferocious warriors (the 'den of lions,' *v.* 11 f.), deserted and silent.

Chap. iii. Further development of the theme of chap. ii. The cruelty, the avarice, the unprincipled diplomacy of the Assyrians are the cause of Nineveh's fall: and again Nahum sees in imagination the chariots and horsemen of the victors forcing their way through the streets and spreading carnage as they go (*vv.* 1–4). For Yahweh is against Nineveh in the day of her calamity; there will be none to comfort her; as little will she be able to avert her doom as was Thebes, the great capital of Egypt, in spite of her strength, and the vast hosts of her defenders (*vv.* 7–11). Her fortresses will fall before the invader, as ripe figs fall into the mouth when the tree is shaken; the busy crowds now thronging her streets will vanish like locusts; and amid the rejoicings of all who have suffered at her hands, the proud empire of Nineveh will pass for ever away (*vv.* 12–19).

Nahum's poetry is fine. Of all the prophets he is the one who in dignity and force approaches most nearly to Isaiah. His descriptions are graphic and brilliant (e. g. ii. 3–5, 10, iii. 2–3); his imagery is effective and striking (e. g. ii. 11, 12, iii. 17, 18); the thought is always expressed compactly; the parallelism is regular; Nahum nowhere displays that prolixity of style characteristic, for example, of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The direct teaching of the book is almost confined to chap. i, where the thought is developed that Yahweh is 'a jealous and avenging God,' who, though He suffer long, will assuredly in the end punish wrong-doing, but who is faithful and good to those who are His true servants. Indirectly, the whole book is a prophecy of judgement upon brutality and wrong. It is remarkable that, unlike most of the prophets (except in some measure Habakkuk), Nahum makes no allusion to the sins of his own people, and sounds no call to repentance. He is so absorbed with the thought of the iniquities and impending punishment of Assyria, that, though he is manifestly aglow with moral feeling, he does not in this connexion think of his own people. The violence, the oppressions, the inhumanities of the tyrant, which have afflicted not Judah only but the then known world, must have their end; and the prophet for the moment will know nothing about his God, save that He is a God of vengeance. It is outraged humanity at large which calls for vengeance from his lips (ii. 13, iii. 4–5, 19^b). 'Assyria in his hands becomes an object-lesson to the empires of the modern world, teaching as an eternal principle of the divine government of the world, the absolute necessity, for a nation's continued vitality, of that righteousness, personal, civic, and national, which alone "exalteth a nation"' (A. R. S. Kennedy in *DB*. iii. 477).

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[1] On the question whether this chapter is really Nahum's, see below, pp. 15, 25 f.

For the *date* of Nahum's prophecy we have, as a *terminus a quo*, the capture of Thebes (alluded to in iii. 8–10) in 663, and as a *terminus ad quem* the destruction of Nineveh by the Umman-manda in 607[1]. These somewhat wide limits may, however, no doubt be reduced.

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[1] The view of Dr. Pusey, and other older commentators, that Nahum prophesied under Hezekiah, is seen to be untenable, now that the date of the capture of Thebes is known.

The Hebrew prophets usually had some historical occasion for their prophecies; and that can hardly in the present case be anything but some great danger threatening Nineveh,—the 'hammer,' as Nahum says in ii. 1, has already 'come up before' her: we should think naturally either of the occasion when, if Herodotus is to be believed, Cyaxares first laid siege to Nineveh in 624, or of the final and successful attack made by the Umman-manda in 607. We know too little of the preliminary movements of the attacking forces, or of the form in which the news of their approach first reached Judah, on either of these occasions, to be able with confidence to fix the date more precisely. The decision must depend largely upon the view taken of i. 13, 15. On the one hand, if these verses (see p. 26 *n.*) are really Nahum's, Kuenen's argument[1] is forcible that, as Judah was probably throughout Asshurbanipal's reign tributary to Assyria (p. 3), the promises of freedom expressed in them suit the first of these occasions much better than the second (when the decline of the Assyrian power had more than begun, and Judah was probably no longer tributary to it): on the other hand, chs. ii—iii seem certainly, in Prof. Kennedy's words (*DB.* iii. 476), to 'palpitate with the conviction that the "utter end" of the Assyrian is at hand,' and hence those scholars (as Wellh., Nowack, Kennedy, Marti), who reject Nahum's authorship of i. 13, 15 (see p. 26), have no hesitation in assigning those parts of the book which they attribute to Nahum to the period shortly before 607, when the enemy had already entered Assyria, but before they had actually invested the capital (see iii. 14 f.): it is also possible, even if i. 13, 15 are from Nahum himself, to refer the prophecy to the same date, if we may suppose Nahum to speak (G. A. Smith, p. 87) not from the feelings of any single year, but with the impression upon him of the whole epoch of Assyrian servitude drawing to a close[1]. We may wish that we had fuller information of the times: but for the purpose of understanding and appreciating the prophecy of Nahum, it is happily immaterial to which of the two occasions in question it is referred.

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[1] *Einl.* ii. § 75. 9, 10. Kuenen's date is accepted by Maspero (*Passing of the Empires*, p. 470 *n.*).

The *unity* of the book was formerly (e.g. by Kuenen in 1891) unquestioned. A closer study of ch. i (see pp. 25 ff.) has, however, led most recent commentators and critics to believe that it is in reality composite, and that the genuine prophecy of Nahum is limited either to ii. 1, 3—iii. 19 (A. R. S. Kennedy, Marti—the latter, however, including i. 11, 14), or, as Nahum could hardly (Wellh.) have begun his prophecy with ii. 1, to i. 9-12, 14, ii. 1, 3—iii. 19 (Nowack), to which the rest of ch. i and ii. 2 were prefixed afterwards as an introduction—i. 2-10 (to take Marti's view) being part of an acrostic Psalm, describing God's vengeance on His foes, and so enunciating the broad principle which is afterwards exemplified in the particular case of Nineveh (ii. 1, 3, &c.), and i. 12[2], 13, 15, ii. 2 proclaiming the other side of the judgement on the heathen, viz. the salvation of Zion, and written with direct reference to the following prophecy on Nineveh. Cf. p. 26 *n.*

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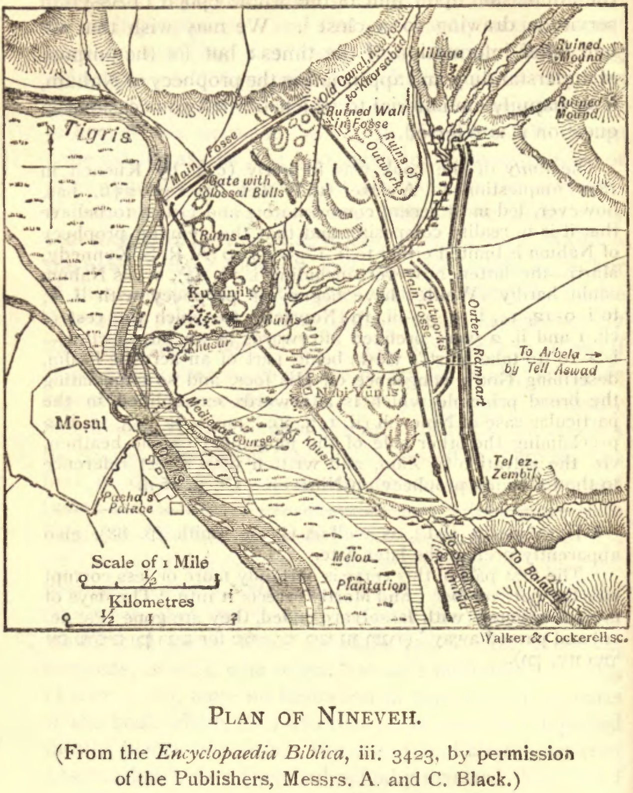
[1] Davidson (p. 17 f.), as well as G. A. Smith (p. 88), also apparently prefers the later date.

[2] The first part of this verse is certainly more or less corrupt (see the note *ad loc.*); and Marti corrects it into, 'The days of my controversy (with Israel) are ended, they are gone (Ps. xc. 10) and passed away' (שלמו ימי ריבי גזו ועברו for אם שלמים וכן רבים וכן נגוזו ועבר).


N
Tigris
Old Canal, now road to Khorsabad
Village
Ruined Mound
Ruined Mound
Ruined Wall in Fosse
Ruins of Outworks
Main Fosse
Gate with Colossal Bulls
Ruins
Kuyunjik
Ruins
Khusur
Nebi Yūnis
Main Fosse
Outworks
Outer Rampart
To Arbela → by Tell Aswad
Mōsul
Mediaeval Course of Khusur
Tigris
Pasha's Palace
Tel ez-Zembil
To Nimrud
To Balawat
Melon Plantation
Scale of 1 Mile
0
½
1
Kilometres
0
½
1

Walker & Cockerell sc.

PLAN OF NINEVEH.

(From the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, iii. 3423, by permission of the Publishers, Messrs. A. and C. Black.)

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS.

N	Nahum
A	Later Addition

NAHUM

THE [a] burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of **1**
Nahum the Elkoshite.

[a] Or, *oracle concerning*

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i. 1. Title.

1. The burden of Nineveh. Render, with marg., *The oracle concerning Nineveh. Massā* means properly a 'lifting up,' and is hence used in a concrete sense sometimes of a 'thing lifted up,' i.e. a 'burden' (e.g. Ex. xxiii. 5), sometimes of a 'lifting up' of the voice, or of a 'word or speech taken up' upon the lips[1], i.e. a 'solemn utterance' or 'oracle': so 2 K. ix. 25 (*lit.* 'lifted up this uplifting' = 'uttered this utterance'; cf. RVm.); Jer. xxiii. 33–40 (where there is a play on the double meaning of the word, 'oracle' and 'burden'); Prov. xxxi. 1; and often in the titles of prophecies, as Is. xiii. 1, xiv. 28, xv. 1, &c. (see RVm.).

the vision. The 'vision,' especially in the earlier history of prophecy, appears often as a form of prophetic intuition (cf. Hos. xii. 10), and the prophets are frequently spoken of as 'seeing' things in vision (e.g. Nu. xxiv. 4, 14; 1 K. xxii. 17, 19; Am. vii–ix; Is. vi; Jer. i. 11, 13): cf. the term 'seer,' 1 S. ix. 9, 11, 18, 19 [*rō'eh*]: 2 S. xxiv. 11; Am. vii. 12 [*ḥōzeh*]; and Is. xxx. 10 (where 'prophets' and 'prophesy' are *lit.* 'gazers' and 'gaze'); and so in course of time 'vision' became a general term for a 'prophecy,' whether actually 'seen' or not (e.g. Is. i. 1; Obad. 1): and to 'see' came to be applied inexactly to 'oracle' (Is. xiii. 1; Hab. i. 1); 'word' (Is. ii. 1; Mic. i. 1); or 'words' (Am. i. 1). There is no reason for supposing, either here or in any of the other last-cited passages, that the prophecy following was originally the subject of a vision.

Nahum the Elkoshite. See the Introduction, § 1. The name 'Nahum' would, by analogy, mean 'full of comfort' [i.e., probably, 'is Yah']: see *DB.* iii. 473 *n.*

2–15. Introduction. Yahweh is a God who hates oppression and is powerful in judgement (*vv.* 2–6), He will therefore assuredly

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[1] Cf. the cognate verb 'to lift' or 'take up' in Nu. xxiii. 7, 18; Jer. vii. 16, 29; Am. v. 1, &c.

2 [A] (א) The LORD is a jealous God and avengeth; the LORD avengeth and is full of wrath; [the LORD taketh vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his
3 enemies. The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power,

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interpose to overthrow the tyrant, and effect the deliverance of His own people (*vv.* 7–15). *Vv.* 2–8 consist really of a series of couplets: and might have been suitably printed in lines exhibiting the parallelism. They also show traces of an acrostic (indicated in the text by the Hebrew letters). See pp. 24–26.

2–6. Yahweh is a jealous and avenging God, who, though He may be long-suffering, does not eventually leave guilt unpunished, but manifests Himself terribly in judgement.

2. More nearly in the order of the original, and also more forcibly:—

A jealous and avenging God is Yahweh,
Yahweh is avenging, and full of wrath;
Yahweh is avenging towards his adversaries,
And he retaineth (wrath) *against his enemies.*

jealous: so that He will not endure that the honour which is His own or His people's due should be permanently withheld with impunity, and especially that it should be rendered to a false god (Ex. xx. 5, xxxiv. 14; Dt. xxxii. 21). Here the implicit thought is that His jealousy is now about to be aroused by the long-continued wrongs inflicted upon His people by its foes (cf. Is. xlii. 13; Ez. xxxvi. 5, 6, xxxix. 25).

avenging: cf. Is. i. 24; Ez. xxv. 14, 17; Is. lix. 17, lxi. 2, lxiii. 4, &c. The thought of Yahweh's vengeance is one which is much more prominent in the later than in the earlier prophets: see, e. g., Is. xxxiv. 8, xxxv. 4 (exilic); Jer. xlvi. 10, l. 15, 28, li. 6, 11, 36.

full of wrath: *lit.* 'possessor of wrath' (so Prov. xxix. 22^b): a poetical expression; cf. (in the Hebrew) Prov. xxii. 24^a.

retaineth (wrath): i. e. is with difficulty appeased. The same expression Lev. xix. 18 (EVV., idiomatically, 'bear any grudge'); Jer. iii. 5; Ps. ciii. 9.

What is here predicated of God is denied of Him in Jer. iii. 5, Ps. ciii. 9, and forbidden to man in Lev. xix. 18 ('Thou shalt not avenge, or retain (anger) towards thy neighbour'): the difference, in each case, of circumstance and situation must be noted.

3^a. slow to anger: as first in Ex. xxxiv. 6 (JE), and repeated thence frequently. *Lit.* 'long of anger' (μακρόθυμος): cf. the opposite, 'short (i. e. quick) of anger,' Prov. xiv. 17.

great in power: not here, as it seems, of physical strength

and will by no means clear *the guilty*:] the LORD (ב) hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. (ג) He rebuketh the sea, and maketh 4
it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth,

(Job ix. 4), but of power to control the feelings (Job vi. 11 f.), and grant pardon to those who have given offence; cf. Nu. xiv. 17 f. (JE), of which indeed the present passage is apparently a reminiscence, 'Let the *power* of Yahweh be great (viz. to pardon, *v.* 19), according as thou hast spoken, saying, *Yahweh is slow to anger*, and plenteous in mercy . . . *but will by no means clear* (the guilty),' &c.

but will by no means clear the guilty. The reverse side of the Divine nature: Yahweh is indeed not readily moved to anger, and is ready to pardon, but He will not in the end leave the impenitent unpunished. The first and third clauses of this verse are taken directly from the great declaration of Yahweh's character contained in Ex. xxxiv. 6 f., and repeated Nu. xiv. 18 (and in part elsewhere, as Joel ii. 13; Ps. lxxxvi. 15, ciii. 8).

clear: more exactly, 'treat as innocent,' or (as in the Decalogue) 'hold guiltless,' i.e. 'leave unpunished,'—an idea which is certainly included: cf. (in the passive) Jer. xxv. 29 'and should ye *be unpunished*?'

3^{b}. To the Hebrews Yahweh seemed to manifest Himself particularly in storm and earthquake, and other great movements of nature; and so there follows a description of His power, as seen in operation in a series of such phenomena:—

Yahweh, his way is in the whirlwind and in the storm,
And the clouds are the dust of his feet.

For the first line cf. especially Ps. xviii. 9–14, xxix. 3–9 (which show how the Hebrews pictured Yahweh as borne along in the thunder-cloud), and see also Is. xxix. 6, and on Hab. iii. 3, 4; the second line suggests a sublime picture of His greatness and majesty.

4. He rebuketh the sea, &c. Viz. by driving it back by His wind, with allusion to the drying up of the Red Sea at the Exodus (cf. Ps. cvi. 9), though (as the participle in the Hebrew shows) the expression is here generalized, and intended to refer to all similar phenomena of nature (cf. Is. xliv. 27, l. 2).

and drieth up all the streams. As the Jordan (Jos. iv. 23; Ps. lxxiv. 15); but also (notice 'all') streams in general, when the heat of summer or a protracted drought (1 K. xvii. 7; Joel i. 20) empties the wādys.

Bashan languisheth, &c. Bashan, Carmel, and Lebanon are

and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.
5 (ה) The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt; (ו)
and the earth is upheaved at his presence, yea, the world,
6 and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before (ז) his
indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his
anger? (ח) his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks
7 are broken asunder by him. (ט) The Lord is good, a

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mentioned as the most luxuriantly wooded parts of Palestine (cf. Is. ii. 13, xxxiii. 9, xxxv. 2 [read *majesty* for *excellency*]); but even they must droop and wither, when the hot sirocco (see on Hag. ii. 17), blowing up fiercely from the desert (Jer. iv. 11), strikes upon them (cf. Hos. xiii. 15; Is. xl. 7). The work and power of God are, indeed, manifest as truly and effectually in the tranquil and normal operations of nature as in those which are violent and extraordinary: but they do not impress the beholder as visibly; and thus the latter are more naturally taken to typify, or illustrate, His revelation in judgement.

flower: better, **bud**, i. e. not only the bud of flowers (Is. xviii. 5), but also budding shoots and foliage (cf. the verb, Pr. xi. 28).

languisheth. Or, *droopeth*: cf. Joel i. 12.

5. The prophet returns here to the thought of *v.* 3^b, the description of the theophany in the storm. As the thunder rolls along, the mountains seem to quake (cf. Ps. xxix. 6, 8; Hab. iii. 6), torrents of water pour down the gullies (Judges v. 5; Mic. i. 4), and the earth, shaken by the thunder (Ps. xviii. 7), seems to rise up out of its place. A thunder-storm in a mountainous region is evidently to be thought of; but the terms of the description are plainly hyperbolical.

is upheaved. The rendering is doubtful. Perhaps, changing only the vowel-points, we should read *is wasted* (Is. vi. 11).

6. The application. Who can stand before such a God, a God at whose presence even the rocks are torn in pieces?

Who can stand, &c. Cf. Jer. x. 10; Mal. iii. 2.

is poured out. For the figure, cf. Jer. vii. 20, xliv. 6 *al.*

like fire. It is as vehement and destructive as a stream of fire.

and the rocks are torn down before him (*lit.* 'from him'). The allusion is to masses of rock loosened in a thunder-storm. 'Torn down': the word is used of *pulling* or *tearing down* an altar (Jud. vi. 30) a tower (viii. 17), a city-wall (2 K. xxv. 10), &c.

7-15. Yahweh's wrath alights, however, not upon those who

strong hold in the day of trouble; and (י) he knoweth
them that put their trust in him. But with an overrunning 8
flood (כ) he will make a full end of the place thereof, and
will pursue his enemies into darkness. [**N**] What do ye 9

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trust in Him, but only upon His foes; and His people's oppressors He will utterly destroy.

7. Yahweh is good, as a strong hold, &c. Cf. Ps. xxxvii. 39; and especially Jer. xvi. 19. But LXX have 'to them that wait for him' (Ps. xxv. 3, &c.; and especially Lam. iii. 25) for 'as a strong hold': this yields a better sense and also forms a better parallel to the next clause, whether we substitute it for 'as a strong hold' (We. formerly, Dav., Smith), or suppose it to have fallen out accidentally before it (Gunkel, Nowack, We. now, Marti), omitting in the latter case the 'as.'

knoweth: i. e. *taketh knowledge of*, *regardeth*, as Ps. i. 6, xxxvii. 18; Gen. xviii. 19 (RV.); Am. iii. 2 ('You only *have I known* of all the families of the earth').

that take refuge in him. RV. 'put their trust in him' is a correct paraphrase, but one that entirely obliterates the expressive figure of the original. The verb is cognate with the substantive rendered *refuge* in Is. iv. 6, xxv. 4, Ps. xlvi. 1, lxi. 3, &c.: it is rendered *take refuge* in RV. of Ruth ii. 12, Ps. xxxvi. 7, lvii. 1, lxi. 4, xci. 4, Is. xiv. 32; and the same rendering might well have been adopted elsewhere, as Jud. ix. 15; Is. xxx. 2, 3; Ps. ii. 12, vii. 1, xi. 1, &c., and here.

8. with an overflowing flood. Carrying all before it (Is. viii. 8, xxviii. 15).

a full end (Heb. *kālāh*). As Jer. iv. 27, v. 10, 18, xxx. 11 = xlvi. 28. (In Is. x. 23, xxviii. 22 rendered 'a consumption.')

the place thereof. Heb. *her place*, i.e. Nineveh's, the pronoun referring to a subject not yet expressed, but in the writer's mind (cf. 'them,' in Is. xiii. 2, 'their' in Is. xxxiii. 2, which show that this use of the pronoun is defensible). LXX, however, have, with a very slight change in the Heb., **them that rise up against him** (Dt. xxxiii. 11 *al.*), which forms an exact parallel to 'his enemies' in clause *b*, and is probably the original reading. Render then, with present tenses (the thought of the verse being now quite general), **maketh a full end of them that rise up against him, and pursueth his enemies into darkness.**

pursueth into darkness. Cf., for the thought, Job xviii. 18.

9. What do ye imagine, &c. Cf. *v.* 11. It is folly to frame plans[1] (cf. Hos. vii. 15) against Yahweh, or seek to thwart His

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[1] The intensive conjugation (to *think much, ponder, meditate*),

imagine against the LORD? he will make a full end:
10 affliction shall not rise up the second time. For though
they be like tangled thorns, and be drenched as it were
in their drink, they shall be devoured [a] utterly as dry

[a] Or, *as stubble fully dry*

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purpose; for **a full end is he making** (or, 'is he about to make'); that is His intention: He is already carrying it out, and it will not be frustrated.

trouble (*v.* 7) **shall not rise up twice:** i. e. (probably) the trouble which now threatens Nineveh will be once for all; it will not need to be repeated. Cf. 1 S. xxvi. 8 'Let me smite him with the spear to the earth once, and I will not repeat it to him' (similarly 2 S. xx. 10). 'He will not take vengeance of his adversaries twice' (Gunk., Bick., Now., Marti: suggested by the LXX)[1] suits, however, the context well, and may be the original reading (cf. p. 25).

10. The American Revisers (see their notes at the end of RV. of the OT.), more exactly, **For entangled like thorns, and drunken as with their drink, they shall be,** &c. The words are understood to mean that the Ninevites, though in consequence of their strong defences they are as difficult to approach and deal with as a thorn-hedge (cf. 2 S. xxiii. 6 f.), and though—with sarcastic allusion to their supposed love of carousals—they are soaked through as with their wine, and consequently so wet that the flames, it might be thought, could not harm them, will nevertheless be consumed as quickly as dry stubble. But the sense thus obtained is very forced; and the words 'drunken as with their drink' come in strangely after the figure of the 'thorns,' besides being (in the Heb.) open to the suspicion of being a corrupt repetition of 'entangled'; so that it is impossible to believe that we have this part of the verse in its original form; the rendering 'like' for עַד is also very questionable. Marti proposes, *They are all of them as thorns cut off* (Is. xxxiii. 12): this yields a good sense; but deviates considerably (except in 'thorns cut off') from the existing text.

be devoured: viz. by the flames; cf. Is. v. 24, xlvii. 14; Obad. 18.

utterly. RVm. *fully* (connecting the word with the ad-

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is against the rendering adopted by many moderns, 'What *think ye* with regard to Yahweh?'

[1] לא יקום פעמים צריו (Jos. x. 13), for לא תקום פעמים צרה.

stubble. There is one gone forth out of thee, that imagin- 11
eth evil against the LORD, [a] that counselleth [b] wickedness.
Thus saith the LORD: Though they be in full strength, 12
and likewise many, even so shall they be cut down, and
he shall pass away. [c] Though I have afflicted thee, I will

[a] Or, *a wicked counsellor* [b] Or, *worthlessness* Heb. *Belial.*
[c] Or, *So will I afflict thee, that I shall afflict &c.*

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jective *dry*). Either rendering is extremely doubtful: the word no doubt belongs really to *v.* 11; see note[1] below.

11. Did not[1] one come forth out of thee, who imagined evil against Yahweh, who counselled villainy? The allusion is generally supposed to be to Sennacherib. The pronoun ('thee') is pointed as a feminine, implying that some country or city is addressed, which, in the present context, can be only Nineveh.

villainy. *Lit.* 'unprofitableness,' but in usage an opprobrious term for what is *base* (Dt. xv. 9 RV.; Ps. ci. 3 RV.), *unprincipled, villainous.* The marg. says, 'Heb. *Belial*'; but the word is not really a proper name, in spite of its use as such (in the form *Beliar*) in later times, as Jubilees i. 20, xv. 33, and in other writings of the same age[2], and 2 Cor. vi. 15. 'Sons' (or 'men') 'of unprofitableness' (Jud. xix. 22, 1 S. xxv. 25 *al.*) means simply *base* (Dt. xiii. 13 RV.) or *unprincipled fellows.*

12[a] (**to pass away**). The hosts of Nineveh, however complete and numerous, will nevertheless vanish and pass away. The Hebrew, however, in which this thought is expressed is very strange, and inspires as little confidence that it is correct as that of *v.* 10. We. suggests tentatively, *Though the great waters* (fig. of the multitudes inhabiting Nineveh, cf. ii. 8) *be never so full, they shall disappear and pass away*: this would yield a good sense; but the word rendered 'never so full' (properly *whole, complete*) is not elsewhere used of waters.

12[b]. The text means: 'Though (*lit.* 'And') I have afflicted thee, (O Judah,) I will afflict thee no more' (so Keil, Marti[3]). The marg. is a threat to Assyria: 'And I will afflict thee, (O Assyria,) so that I afflict thee no more' (so Ew., Hi., We., Dav., Smith), i.e. the blow will be a final one. The latter is the better rendering of the Hebrew as it stands; but a very slight change (see note[3]) would

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[1] So Wellh., very cleverly, reading the superfluous מלא ('utterly,' 'fully'), at the end of *v.* 10, as הלא at the beginning of *v.* 11.

[2] See *EB.* s. v.; and Charles's edition of the apocryphal *Ascension of Isaiah* (1900), pp. lv–lvii, 6–7.

[3] Marti, however, easing the grammar by reading, for ועניתך לא, עניתך ולא, i.e. *I have afflicted thee, but I will afflict thee no more.*

13 afflict thee no more. [**A?**] And now will **I** break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder.
14 [**N**] And the Lord hath given commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image; I will make thy grave; for thou art

express unexceptionably the sense of the former rendering; and in the uncertainty of the context it is difficult to say which was the sense originally intended.

13. Judah is addressed: she will now, it is promised, be freed from the yoke of Assyria. Judah was probably tributary to Assyria through much, if not the whole, of Asshurbanipal's reign (cf. pp. 3 f., 12). Cf. the same promise as made by Isaiah (Is. x. 27, xiv. 25).

his yoke. Properly, 'his bar,' i. e. (here) the horizontal pole of the yoke, to which two other perpendicular 'bars' were attached, enclosing the neck of the animal: cf. the 'bars of the yoke,' Lev. xxvi. 13; Ez. xxxiv. 27; Jer. xxvii. 2; Is. lviii. 6 (twice), 9 (where 'yoke' is properly 'bar,' as here).

and will burst (or, better, **snap,** Is. v. 27) **thy thongs asunder.** The thongs fastening the yoke to the animal's neck. The same two words are regularly used in the same connexion: cf. Ps. ii. 3, and especially Jer. xxx. 8.

14. Here the personified Assyrian people is addressed (the pronouns in this verse are pointed as masculines). As Wellh. has remarked, the verse would be much more forcible if the opening 'And' (ו) were omitted: **Yahweh hath given commandment,** &c.

no more of thy name be sown. More exactly, *it shall not be sown from thy name any more*, i. e. thou shalt be annihilated, there will be none to perpetuate thy name: cf. Is. xiv. 20^{b}, and such expressions as *destroy* or *blot out* the name, Dt. vii. 24, xxix. 20; 1 S. xxiv. 21.

out of the house (i. e. *temple*) **of thy gods,** &c. The Inscriptions have disclosed to us how many gods the Assyrians worshipped, Asshur, Ishtar, Anu, Shamash, Ninib, &c., and what honours they paid them[1]; but now, the prophet declares, they will all be powerless to save their country; their temples will be sacked, and their images destroyed.

I will make thy grave, i. e. prepare a grave for thee. The prophet pictures the whole nation as doomed to be laid in the grave together.

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[1] Jastrow, *Religion of Bab. and Ass.* (1898), pp. 188–238.

vile. [**A** ?] [a]Behold, upon the mountains the feet of him 15
that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! Keep
thy feasts, O Judah, perform thy vows: for [b]the wicked
one shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.

[a] [Ch. ii. 1 in Heb.] [b] Or, the man of *worthlessness* Heb. *Belial.*

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for thou art of small account. For the rendering, see Job xl. 4 RV.; and cf. 1 S. ii. 30 ('be lightly esteemed').

vile in RV. is retained here from AV.; and, as Kimchi's note on the passage shows[1], *vile* in AV. has here its now obsolete sense (derived directly from the Lat. *vilis*, 'cheap'), of *common* or *of small account*. The Heb. word *ḳālal* does not mean 'vile' in its modern sense of 'morally detestable'[2]. But the verse ends weakly; and perhaps, with a slight change, we should read (We., Marti), *I will make thy grave a shame* (iii. 5).

15. Assyria is no more; and the prophet sees in imagination upon the mountains the messengers hastening to announce the glad tidings in Jerusalem. Judah is now free; and she may keep her feasts in gladness, and offer thanks for her deliverance in fearlessness and security. The greater part of clause *a* is repeated by the author of Is. xl–lxvi in Is. lii. 7, when announcing to his people the approaching fall of Babylon, and the restoration of the exiles ('How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet,' &c.).

perform thy vows. The vows made in the days of her adversity (Ps. lxvi. 13–14). The command to perform, or pay, them implies indirectly that the prayer for deliverance has been granted, and that the danger is now past: cf. Ps. xxii. 25, lxi. 8, lxvi. 13.

the villainous one. A term of reproach for the hateful Assyrian, whose officers appointed to collect the tribute (cf. pp. 3 f., and Is. xxxiii. 18) will no more pass through Jerusalem. On the Heb. word used, see on *v.* 11; and for 'worthlessness,' as equivalent to 'worthless man (*or* men),' cf. 2 S. xxiii. 6 (see RVm.), Job xxxiv. 18^a (RV. 'vile,' in the modern sense of the word). With the promise in general, cf. Is. lii. 1: also Joel iii. 17^b; Zech. ix. 8.

In parts of Nah. i there are traces of an alphabetic arrangement in the successive half-verses, similar to what we find in Pss. ix–x

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[1] The translators of 1611 are often dependent upon Kimchi (A. D. 1160–1235); and he explains here by *looked down upon, despised*.

[2] The reader should remember that there are several passages in AV., and even in RV., in which 'vile' is used in this old sense, as Job xl. 4 AV., Jer. xv. 19 AV. RV.; Lam. i. 11 AV. RV.; Phil. iii. 21 AV. (= ταπεινώσεως).

(imperfect), xxv, xxxiv, xxxvii, cxi, cxii, cxix, cxlv, Lam. i-iv. Prov. xxxi. 10-31: it has accordingly been supposed that originally there was here a complete acrostic poem, and various attempts have been made to restore it completely. The alphabetical order is found actually in *vv.* 2^{a} (א), 4^{a} (ג), 5^{a} (ה), 5^{b} (ו), 6^{b} (ח), 7^{a} (ט), 9^{a} (כ), and it can be restored by insignificant omissions in *vv.* 2^{b} (ב), 7^{b} (י), 12^{b} (ע), and 14^{a} (צ), and by a transposition and the addition of a letter in *v.* 6^{a} (ז): the remaining verses can be adjusted to it only by the assumption that more extensive alterations and transpositions have taken place in the text than are probable (see, for instance, the restoration in Nowack's Commentary[1]). The best study on the subject is that of G. B. Gray in the *Expositor*, Sept. 1898, p. 207 ff., who, working upon the results obtained by his predecessors[2], restores the first 12½ couplets of the acrostic as follows[3]:—

2^{a} (א) A God jealous and avenging is Yahweh;
Yahweh is avenging and full of wrath[4].
3^{b} (ב) In whirlwind and storm is his way,
and clouds are the dust of his feet.
4^{a} (ג) He rebuketh the sea and drieth it up,
and parcheth all the rivers.
4^{b} (ד) Bashan and Carmel lose their leaves[5],
and the bud of Lebanon languisheth.
5^{a} (ה) Mountains quake because of him,
and [all] the hills melt.
5^{b} (ו) And the earth becometh desolate[6] before him,
the world and all that dwell therein.
6^{a} (ז) Before his indignation, who can stand?[7]
and who can abide in the heat of his anger?

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[1] Ed. 1: in ed. 2 the attempt is abandoned after *v.* 8, and it is admitted that it cannot be carried through without 'the greatest violence.'

[2] Especially by Bickell (1880, 1882, 1894), Gunkel (1893), and Nowack (1897).

[3] The English renderings are sometimes accommodated to those adopted in the preceding notes.

[4] The four lines which here follow in the Heb. text must, if the poem was once an acrostic, be regarded as a gloss, intended to qualify the absolute statements contained in the two preceding lines.

[5] *Lit.* 'become thin' (דלל for אמלל).

[6] וַתִּשָּׁא (Is. vi. 11), for וַתִּשָּׂא: so Gunkel, Nowack.

[7] In *v.* 6^{a}, however, זעמו מי יעמד לפניו, though quite grammatical, is less easy and natural than the existing order לפני זעמו מי יעמד: see Ps. cxlvii. 17; and cf. analogously Job iv. 2, xxvi. 14, xxxviii. 37, xxxix. 5, xli. 5, 6.

6b (ח) His fury is poured out like fire,
and the rocks are torn down[1] before him.
7a (ט) Good is Yahweh to [them that wait for him][2],
a stronghold in the day of trouble.
7b (י) He knoweth them that take refuge in him,
and in the overflowing flood[3] [delivereth them].
8 (כ) An utter end he maketh of them that rise up against him,
and he thrusteth[4] his enemies into darkness.
9c (ל) Not twice doth he take vengeance on his adversaries[5],
9b an utter end he maketh.
9a (מ) What do ye devise against Yahweh?

As Dr. Gray points out, the successive Hebrew letters appear so often in the existing text at the constant interval of just two lines, that their occurrence can scarcely be accidental; and if this be granted, it is legitimate to endeavour to restore the acrostic. Dr. Gray's restoration of *vv.* 2-9 postulates no unreasonable textual alterations, and is certainly plausible. He makes no attempt to restore the rest of the acrostic, rightly feeling that the changes required would be so radical that there could be no confidence in their correctness[6]. We possess indeed no assurance that *v.* 10 ff. ever were part of the acrostic: the traces of the alphabetic order are here much slighter than in *vv.* 2-9, and the character of the verses differs; in *vv.* 2-9 the description of judgement is quite general, whereas in *v.* 10 ff. there seem to be definite references to a particular foe, whose yoke has rested upon Judah, but whose destruction is now promised, and the way is thus prepared for chap. ii. A formal acrostic poem is not very likely to have been adopted by Nahum himself as an introduction to this prophecy: assuming its existence (as far as *v.* 9) to be established, the most probable view is that a later editor found the poem among the materials before him, and the beginning of Nahum's genuine prophecy being mutilated, he adapted it as a suitable introduction to a prophecy of judgement, attaching himself no importance to its alphabetical form as such, and so

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[1] Dr. Gray, with We., Gunk., Now., Marti, reads *are kindled* (נצתו for נתצו): but this change seems unnecessary.

[2] See the note on *v.* 7.

[3] Cf. Ps. xxxii. 6b.

[4] יהדף for ירדף (so Gunk., Now., Wellh., Marti; see Job xviii. 18 Heb.).

[5] See the note on *v.* 9.

[6] Wellh., in the third edition of his *Kleine Propheten* (1898), p. 159, rejects altogether the attempts made by Gunkel and Bickell to restore *vv.* 10 ff.: he accepts, however, the acrostic for *vv.* 2-8 substantially as given above.

2 [**N**] He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy
face: keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins
2 strong, fortify thy power mightily. [**A**] For the LORD

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combining it in its latter part with what was preserved of Nahum himself (cf. Budde, *EB.* iii. 3261)[1].

ii. 1–10. A powerful and graphic imaginative description of the capture and sack of Nineveh.

1. The approach of the attacking army. Nineveh is addressed, Nahum ironically bidding her prepare to resist the assailant.

He that dasheth in pieces: i. e. the destroying foe. As pointed, however, the Hebrew could only mean *The scatterer*; but probably the punctuation should be altered so as to express the sense of **The Hammer** or **War-club** (lit. *The shatterer*: Pr. xxv. 18 'maul'), the same word which in Jer. li. 20^a (AV. and RV. 'battle-axe') is applied to a formidable crushing power (cf. the cognate verb, *vv.* 20^b–23).

is come up before thy face: i. e. has broken up camp, and is now advancing against thee.

make strong (or **firm**) **the loins:** i. e. be courageous, the loins being the seat of strength. Contrast *v.* 10 'there is trembling in all loins,' and 'make the loins to totter,' in Ps. lxix. 23.

fortify thy power mightily: better, 'strengthen (thy) might exceedingly,' i.e. collect thy powers, show both bodily prowess and mental intrepidity. Cf. the same expression, used similarly of a warrior, in Am. ii. 14.

2. The reason: Yahweh's purpose to restore the ancient glory and splendour of Jacob (cf. Is. xiv. 1). The verse seems, however, to be misplaced: it interrupts the description of the advance of the foe (*vv.* 1, 3), and would more naturally follow i. 15, even if (note [1] below; p. 13) it is not a later addition to the text of Nahum.

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[1] In i. 12—ii. 2 it has been noticed that Assyria and Judah are addressed alternately in alternate verses: and it has consequently been supposed that the verses relating to Judah (i. 13, 15, ii. 2) do not belong to the original context of Nahum (We., Smith), but are a later addition intended to express the joyful consequences for Judah of the fall of its great foe (Now., Marti). Certainly ii. 2 cannot be in its right place, and the terms in which it is expressed might even suggest that Judah had been 'emptied' as it was in the Babylonian captivity; but the terms of i. 13, 15 leave no doubt as to who is addressed; and there seems to be no reason why Nahum himself should not have turned aside from his main theme in order to congratulate his country on its coming deliverance.

bringeth again the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel: for the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches. [N] The shield of his mighty 3

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bringeth again. Rather, **is bringing back.** *Again* was used in Old English where we should say *back*; and is so found in EVV. in passages where *back* would be much clearer: cf. Gen. xiv. 16, xxiv. 5, 6, 8, xlviii. 21. The participle, *is bringing back* (i. e. is on the way to bring back), as often in the prophets, of the imminent future (or of the future, conceived and pictured as imminent).

excellency (twice). Render **majesty,** or **pride** (in a good sense): cf. Hos. v. 5 and vii. 10 ('the pride of Israel'—referred here by some to Yahweh), Am. vi. 8, viii. 7, Jer. xiii. 9 (in a bad sense), Ps. xlvii. 4 (in a good sense), where a corresponding change should be made in EVV. *Excellency* (like *excellent*) retained in Old English its etymological sense, which it has now lost, of *surpassingness, pre-eminence* (from *ex-cello*, to *rise up out of*); and both words wherever they occur in AV. or RV. must be understood in this sense[1]. Here, however, the Heb. word (*gā'ōn*) does not mean even *pre-eminence*, but *majesty* or *pride* (by both of which words it is in fact often rendered: Is. ii. 10, 19, 21; Mic. v. 4 *al.*). The retention of *excellency* and *excellent* in the RV. for words expressive of *pre-eminence, superiority*, or *majesty*, is much to be deplored[2].

Jacob,—in poetry (e. g. Gen. xlix.) and the higher prose style, a synonym of *Israel*,—must here (from the context) denote *Judah* (as Is. xliii. 1, xliv. 1 *al.*).

as the majesty of Israel: i. e. if the text be sound, as He has promised (e. g. in Hos. xiv) to restore the glory of the Northern Kingdom. But if a comparison between the two kingdoms had been intended, we should have expected it to be more clearly expressed by the use of 'Judah' for 'Jacob' in the preceding clause: perhaps therefore the present clause is a gloss, added originally upon the margin by a scribe.

emptiers. Fig. for *plunderers*: cf. Is. xxiv. 1; Jer. li. 2.

and marred their vine branches. Judah is represented under the figure of a vine (Is. v. 1 ff.; Ps. lxxx. 8 ff.), which has been ravaged by rough assailants (cf. Jer. v. 10, xii. 10—in each case the word rendered *destroyed* being the same as that rendered *marred* here).

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[1] Except Ps. xxxvii. 20, 1 P. ii. 9 (RV.), where the Revisers have introduced it in its modern sense.

[2] See more fully the synopsis of passages in the writer's *Commentary on Daniel* (in the *Cambridge Bible*), pp. 32–34.

men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots [a] flash with steel in the day of his preparation,
4 and the [b] spears are shaken terribly. The chariots rage

[a] Heb. *are with fire of steel.* [b] Heb. *fir trees.*

3–5. Continuation of *v.* 1; and description of the assault.

3. The equipment of the warriors.

mighty men: i. e. warriors: a common usage, as in David's 'mighty men,' 2 S. xxiii. 8, 1 K. i. 8, 10. The pronoun ('his') refers to the destroyer mentioned in *v.* 1.

made red: the allusion is uncertain. It is generally supposed to be to shields covered with bright copper, which in the sunlight would reflect a reddish tint (Jos. *Ant.* xiii. 12. 5; 1 Macc. vi. 39); but shields were also often covered with leather, which may have been dyed red. Whichever of these views is correct, the red colour is no doubt mentioned particularly as being suggestive of blood.

in scarlet. The army of the Persians, under the younger Cyrus (Xen. *Cyrop.* VI. iv. 1), 'flashed with bronze, and gleamed with crimson military cloaks (*ἤνθει δὲ φοινικίσι*)'; the Spartan soldiers, also, wore cloaks of the same colour (Liddell and Scott, s. v. *φοινικίς*).

steel. The word occurs only here: and the meaning 'steel' was conjectured by Ges. from the sense of the corresponding word in Arabic. It is, however, a serious objection to this etymology that the Arabic word for steel (*phulādh*) is borrowed from the Persian (*pūlādo*); and a Persian word would hardly have found its way into Hebrew as early as in the time of Nahum. But whatever uncertainty may rest upon the meaning of this particular word, 'with fire' (see RVm.) makes it probable that the clause was meant to contain some reference to 'the burnished plates of metal with which the chariots were mounted or mailed, and the glittering weapons hung on them' (Dav.).

in the day of his preparation. Viz. for the battle: cf. the cognate verb in Jer. xlvi. 14, Ez. xxxviii. 7.

spears: *lit.* 'fir trees,' supposed here to be used for 'long lances.' But the expression is a strange one; and LXX, Pesh. (reading ב for פ) have 'horsemen,' or, as the same word might also be vocalized (*Lex.* p. 832^a), **chargers** (Jer. xlvi. 4): the clause will then describe the impetuous movements of the cavalry, as they rush into the fray (so We., Now., Marti, Halévy).

are shaken terribly: *lit.* 'are made to reel' (or 'quiver'), without 'terribly.' Of the horses, **quiver** with impatience.

4. The charging of the chariots.

rage: *lit.* 'are mad.' Cf. Jer. xlvi. 9, also of chariots.

in the streets, they justle one against another in the broad
ways: the appearance of them is like torches, they run
like the lightnings. He remembereth his worthies: they 5
stumble in their march; they make haste to the wall
thereof, and the mantelet is prepared. The gates of the 6

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the streets . . . the broad places. As the attacking forces do not make their assault upon the walls till *v.* 5 *end*, the prophet must here picture them as engaged in the 'streets' and 'broad places' of the suburbs, outside the fortified wall of the city, and according to Col. Billerbeck, in his elaborate study of the topography and fortifications of ancient Nineveh[1], on its N. side. The 'broad place' was very much what we should call a *square*: cf. (in RV.) Is. xv. 3; 2 Ch. xxxii. 6; Neh. viii. 1, 3, 16. The word is often, even in RV., misrendered 'street'; cf. on Zech. viii. 4.

like torches, &c. 'The glitter of the mailed chariots and their furious racing is compared to torches and lightning' (Davidson).

run. More exactly, 'dart to and fro,' the form used being intensive. Halévy, changing a letter, would read *flash*.

5$^{a, b}$. The hurried and impotent measures of defence taken by the inhabitants.

He remembereth his worthies. 'He' is the Assyrian king, who, as he sees the enemy's chariots approaching the walls, *bethinks himself of his worthies*, or *nobles* (Jud. v. 13),—i. e. of the commanders of his troops (cf. iii. 18), who may summon their men, and organize the defence of the city.

they stumble in their march. The defenders, being summoned suddenly, and badly disciplined, stumble over one another in their haste (contrast Is. v. 27, xiv. 32 RVm.).

5$^{c, d}$. The besiegers' assault upon the walls.

the mantelet: *lit.* 'the coverer.' The word occurs only here; but probably denotes the 'mantelet[2],' or movable shelter, which enclosed and protected the men who worked the ram, or other battering implement, employed in ancient warfare for making a breach in a wall. See illustrations of such movable shelters, as used by the Assyrians themselves, in Rawlinson, *Anc. Monarchies*, i. 470, or *EB.* s. v. 'Siege.'

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[1] Billerbeck und Jeremias, *Der Untergang Nineveh's und die Weissagungsschrift des Nahum* in Delitzsch and Haupt's *Beiträge zur Assyriologie*, iii. (1895), p. 146.

[2] 'Mantelet' (from *mantle* and *mantel*, both meaning, in different senses, a 'covering') is defined as a movable wooden penthouse, used by miners in approaching the walls of a castle or town.

7 rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved. [a] And Huzzab is uncovered, she is carried away, and her hand-

[a] Or, *And it is decreed; she is uncovered &c.*

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6. The entry into the city. (Cf. the plan, p. 16.)

The gates of the streams. Nineveh lay on the E. bank of the Tigris, about 25 miles above its confluence with the Upper Zab (which flows into it from the NE.); it was in shape an irregular parallelogram, its NW. wall being about a mile long, and its SW. wall about two and a half miles long. The Khusur, a perennial mountain-stream, ran through it from NE. to SW.; a little NW. of this there was also a canal, which left the Khusur higher up, and likewise flowed through the city till it entered the Tigris. The wall of the city was surrounded by a deep moat. E. of the city there was a strong semi-circular outwork; and outside this, two massive walls, each at least fifty feet high, and nearly three miles long, with a broad moat between them. These moats were filled with water from the Khusur and the canal; and remains of the large dams and sluices regulating the supply of water are still traceable in places. We cannot, however, be sure what exactly the 'gates of the streams' here mean. The sluices by which the moats were emptied have been suggested; but perhaps the most probable view on the whole is that the reference is to the gates at the points where the Khusur and the canal passed through the city walls (the vulnerable side of Nineveh was on the N.). It is scarcely to be supposed that Nahum had an accurate topographical knowledge of Nineveh; he knew, no doubt, generally that it was protected by strong walls and encircling moats: the details he would fill in with the help of his imagination. Whatever 'gates' he had in mind, the effect of their being opened, as the prophet pictured it, was that the city was at the mercy of the foe.

the palace is dissolved. More clearly (for 'dissolve' is not now used in its old fig. sense of *relax*, *enfeeble*, *weaken*), 'is melted away (in fear)'; the meaning being that its inmates are incapacitated and helpless through terror and despair. We might say now, **is in dismay.** Cf. Ex. xv. 15; Jos. ii. 9, 24; Is. xiv. 31.

7. The capture and exile of the queen.

Huzzab. The sequel shows (notice 'her handmaids') that this must either be itself the name of the queen, or be the corruption of some word which was the name of the queen. Nothing more is known of the person intended; nor has any light been thrown upon the word by Assyriology. The marg. *it is decreed* is doubtful philologically, and may be disregarded.

uncovered: i. e. exposed, dishonoured: cf. iii. 5; Is. xlvii. 2, 3 (of Babylon, figured as a lady, led ignominiously into exile).

maids [a] mourn as with the voice of doves, tabering upon
their [b] breasts. But Nineveh hath been [c] from of old like 8
a pool of water: yet they flee away; Stand, stand, *they*
cry; but none [d] looketh back. Take ye the spoil of silver, 9

[a] Or, *lead* her [b] Heb. *hearts*.
[c] Or, *from the days* that *she* hath been
[d] Or, *causeth* them *to turn*

---

carried away. Better, 'taken off' (*lit.* 'taken up': cf. Ps. cii. 24, Job xxxvi. 20 RVm., of sudden removal).

mourn. Moan (which is no doubt the sense intended by the Revisers in 'mourn'[1]). The verb means elsewhere in Heb. *to lead* (so AV. and RVm.); but 'lead' is here unsuited to the context, and 'moan' is supported by the use of the corresponding word in Syriac (see Ps. xxxviii. 8, in the Syriac Version).

as with the voice of doves. For the comparison of the moaning of mourners to the note of the dove, cf. Ez. vii. 16; also Is. xxxviii. 14, lix. 11 (in each case **mourn** being = 'moan').

tabering: i. e. drumming or beating[2]. To smite the breast was a gesture of grief or despair: Luke xviii. 13; cf. also *κόπτομαι* (Mt. xi. 17, &c.), *τύπτομαι*, and *Aen.* i. 481.

8. The vast population of Nineveh is compared to the water of a large tank, rapidly pouring away through opened sluices: the command to halt is unheeded; none pauses in his flight.

from the days that **she** hath been (RVm.): i. e. ever since the beginning of her history. RV. (= AV.) is a paraphrase[3]. But it is very possible that some letters (מימי) have been repeated by error; and that we should read simply, *But Nineveh is like a pool of waters fleeing away.*

flee away: properly, 'are fleeing'; the prophet realizes the scene with great vividness. 'They' refers to 'water' (*lit.* 'waters').

look not back. The marg. is unnecessary: see Jer. xlvi. 5.

9. The sack of the city. Nineveh being thus abandoned by its inhabitants, the prophet dramatically addresses the conquerors, and bids them plunder its treasures, which include every kind of valuable, and are endless.

Take ye the spoil of silver, &c. Or, more tersely and forcibly (like the Heb.), 'Plunder silver! plunder gold!'

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[1] Cf. 'mourn' (i. e. *moan*), said of doves, in Is. xxxviii. 14, lix. 11; Ez. vii. 16.

[2] The verb used is derived from the Heb. word for a *taber* or *timbrel*, and is used in Ps. lxviii. 25 of striking the *timbrel*.

[3] The Heb. is, however, very peculiar. The same sense would be obtained much more naturally by reading מֵימֶיהָ for מִימֵי הִיא: see 1 K. i. 6; Job xxxviii. 12.

take the spoil of gold: for there is none end of the store,
10 the [a]glory of all pleasant furniture. She is empty, and
void, and waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees
smite together, and anguish is in all loins, and the faces
11 of them all are waxed pale. Where is the den of the lions,

[a] Or, *wealth*

---

the glory (or as marg.: see Gen. xxxi. 1. RVm., and cf. Is. x. 3 *end*) **of all precious articles** (Hos. xiii. 15, where the Heb. is the same). The word rendered *articles* is a wide one, and may include both jewels, or ornaments (Ex. xi. 2), vessels (2 K. iv. 3), and household goods or furniture (Gen. xxxi. 37, xlv. 20, 'stuff'), as also weapons (1 S. xxi. 8), instruments (Am. vi. 5), &c. The valuables of all kinds to be found in a great city are what is denoted by the expression.

10. In a series of exclamations, the prophet depicts graphically the desolation of the city, and the helplessness and dismay of those still remaining in it: **Empty, and blank, and bare! and melting heart, and tottering of knees, and anguish in all loins; and the faces of them all are waxed pale.**

empty, &c. The first three words (*būḳāh ūmebūḳāh ūmebullāḳāh*, properly substantives) contain a paronomasia such as the Hebrew prophets love (cf. Is. xxii. 5, xxix. 2; Zeph. i. 15), but of a kind which cannot be reproduced in English. For the word rendered *empty* cf. the cognate verb, Jer. xix. 7, and of a land, as here, *v.* 2 above, Jer. li. 2, Is. xxiv. 1, 3; for that rendered *bare*, Is. xxiv. 1 (EVV. *maketh . . waste*: not elsewhere).

melting heart: i.e. courage gone: Jos. vii. 5; Is. xiii. 7 *al.*

tottering of knees. Cf. the 'bowing knees' of Job iv. 4, Is. xxxv. 3. For *tottering*, see Jer. x. 4 ('move'), Is. xxviii. 7 ('stumble'). 'Smite together' is a paraphrase, due to the Targ. and Kimchi explaining here by the word used in Dan. v. 6.

anguish (properly 'twisting,' 'writhing') **in all loins.** Cf. Is. xxi. 3.

and the faces, &c. The same clause recurs in Joel ii. 6. The expression rendered 'are waxed pale' is a peculiar one, and its exact meaning is uncertain (modern scholars commonly render *withdraw beauty*): but the paraphrase of RV. no doubt expresses fairly the general sense.

11–12. The prophet, seeing in imagination Nineveh's place empty, inquires ironically what has become of it. He calls it a den of 'lions,' with allusion not only to the intrepidity of its warriors, but also to the cruelty, ferocity, and rapacity, with which, as their inscriptions abundantly testify, they treated conquered nations, dealing mercilessly with their captives, and, like lions carrying off

and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion
[a] *and* the lioness walked, the lion's whelp, and none made
them afraid? The lion did tear in pieces enough for his 12
whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his caves
with prey, and his dens with ravin. Behold, I am against 13
thee, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will burn her chariots

[a] Or, even *the old lion*

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prey to their dens, conveying the spoil to Nineveh for the beautification of their capital.

the feeding place of the young lions. More exactly, *and a pasture ground was it for the young lions.* The rendering of RV. conceals a difficulty. The Heb. word used means a *grazing-* or *pasture-ground* (Ez. xxxiv. 4) for cattle, not a 'feeding-place' in which a carnivorous animal might find or devour its prey. By transposing two letters (We., Now., Marti), we obtain **cave** (not the word used in *v.* 12) for 'pasture-ground,' which forms a good parallel to 'den.'

and **the lioness.** The marg. may be disregarded. We., Now., Smith, Marti, however (following LXX, Pesh.), read, for 'where the lion (and) the lioness walked,' 'whither the lion retreated' (*lit.* 'went to enter in,' לבוא for לביא).

and none made them afraid. Finely suggestive of the security with which Nineveh exercised its supremacy over the nations.

12. An effective figurative description of the ferocity, destructiveness and rapacity displayed by the Assyrians in their campaigns. The verse might be illustrated from almost every inscription recording the exploits of the Assyrian kings.

caves. Better, for distinction, **holes**: 1 S. xiv. 11; Job xxx. 6 (RV.).

ravin. An archaism for *plunder* (Old-F. *ravine*; Lat. *rapina*, the word used here in the Vulgate). Elsewhere we have the verb *to ravin*, as Gen. xlix. 27; Mt. vii. 15: cf. *Cymbeline*, i. 6, 49. See Aldis Wright's *Bible Word-book*, s. v.

13. But now, ere long, all this will belong to the past; Yahweh has pronounced the word against Nineveh; and the voice of her emissaries, bearing unwelcome commands among the nations, will no more be heard.

I am against thee. So iii. 5; and often in Jer. (as xxi. 13, xxiii. 30, 31, 32) and Ezek. (as v. 8, xiii. 8, 20, xxi. 8). Not elsewhere: cf. the writer's *Introduction to the Literature of the OT.* p. 279 (ed. 6 or 7, p. 297).

her chariots. Abrupt changes of person certainly occur in

in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young
lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the
voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.
3 Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and rapine;
2 the prey departeth not. The noise of the whip, and the

Heb. poetry (e. g. Is. xlii. 20): but the change from the second person to the third is here very weak, and the second person reappears directly afterwards: so that no doubt **thy** should be read for *her*. The war-chariots of the Assyrians were famous (cf. Is. xxxvii. 24). At the same time, as the figure of the lions is kept up in the sequel, we should rather expect some kindred
8 expression here: Davidson suggests *thy lair* (so Halévy), Smend *thy thicket* (Jer. iv. 7).

young lions. As in *v.* 11, a figure for warriors.

thy messengers. Hateful officials like the Rabshakeh, Is. xxxvi. 4 ff., or the 'messengers' mentioned in Is. xxxvii. 9 ff., exacting tribute (cf. p. 12) or demanding submission: see also Is. xxxiii. 18.

iii. In this chapter the theme of ch. ii is further developed and confirmed. The approaching downfall of Nineveh (which is again vividly portrayed, *vv.* 2, 3) is a natural consequence of her cruel and treacherous treatment of other nations, *vv.* 1–7; the fate of Thebes, in Egypt, will also be hers; her defences, one after another, will yield to the invader; and, amid the rejoicings of all who have suffered at her hands, her power, invincible as it seemed, will pass for ever away, *vv.* 8–19.

1. Ah! the bloody city, &c. Alluding to the sanguinary military expeditions in which the Assyrians were nearly always engaged.

Ah! not 'Woe' (see Jer. xxii. 18, xxxiv. 5): the interj. *hôy* is not denunciatory, but expresses dissatisfaction and pain: cf. Hab. ii. 6, 9, 12, &c.

lies. Alluding probably to the delusive promises of help or protection by which the Assyrians would take advantage of the weaker nations, and get them into their power.

rapine. Properly 'what is rent.' The cognate verb occurs in Ps. vii. 2, where it is used of a lion, and rendered in EVV. 'rending in pieces.'

the prey. Properly, 'what is torn,' as ii. 13 and frequently (cf. the cognate verb 'tear' in Ps. vii. 2). This word and 'rapine' show that the figure of ii. 11 f. is still in the prophet's mind: Nineveh is like a lions' den full of torn prey. The inscriptions of the Assyrian kings abound with descriptions of the

noise of the rattling of wheels; and pransing horses, and
jumping chariots; the horseman [a]mounting, and the 3
flashing sword, and the glittering spear; and a multitude
of slain, and a great heap of carcases: and there is none
end of the corpses; they stumble upon their corpses:
because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well 4
favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth

[a] Or, *charging*

endless booty which they took year after year from conquered nations.

2–3. A graphic description of the chariots and horsemen of the foe, forcing their way through the streets, and spreading carnage as they go. The series of exclamations, as ii. 10.

2. pransing. Cf. Jud. v. 22.

jumping. So rapidly, viz., do they advance over the uneven ground. Cf. Joel ii. 5, where the same word is rendered 'leap.'

3. mounting. The marg. **charging** is much preferable, the verb being causative (*lit.* 'bringing up,' viz. the horse): so Jer. li. 27 (RV. '*cause* the horses *to come up*'). The *sword* and *spear* which follow are those of the foot-soldiers.

4. The reason why this doom falls upon Nineveh. **Whoredom** is here used figuratively of the deceptive friendship and specious promises by which the Assyrians beguiled the smaller states, so as to get them into their power. Nineveh is called by the opprobrious term *harlot*, because, being externally attractive ('well-favoured') and plausible, she by these methods lured the nations to their ruin, merely in order to benefit and aggrandize herself[1].

well favoured: i. e. 'beautiful,'—'favour' in Old English having the meaning of *appearance*, *aspect*, *countenance* (as in Shakespeare, *Cymb.* v. 5, 93 'His *favour* is familiar to me')[2]. So Gen. xxix. 17, xxxix. 6, xli. 2, and elsewhere, in both AV. and RV. The allusion will be to the beauty and magnificence of the city, which dazzled and fascinated beholders.

the mistress of witchcrafts: or, of 'sorceries' (cf. Is. xlvii.

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[1] The terms 'whoredom,' 'harlot,' 'go a-whoring,' are commonly used in a figurative sense of infidelity to Yahweh, and especially of the desertion of Him for other gods (as Ex. xxxiv. 15, 16); but this will not be the meaning here, where the reference is to a heathen state.

[2] See further examples in Aldis Wright's *Bible Word-book*, s. v. 'To favour' is still used in many parts of England in the sense of *to seem, appear* (Jos. Wright's *Eng. Dialect Dict.*, s. v.).

nations through her whoredoms, and families through her
5 witchcrafts. Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD
of hosts, and I will discover thy skirts [a] upon thy face;
and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the
6 kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth
upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a
7 gazingstock. And it shall come to pass, that all they that

[a] Or, *before*

9; and 'sorcerers' in Mal. iii. 5). The reference is to 'the arts of statecraft, the influences used upon the nations, which acted on them like the charms and incantations and drugs of the sorceress' (Davidson).

selleth: i. e. betrays them, robs them of their liberty, brings them into slavery to itself.

families. In a wide sense = ***nations***, as Gen. xii. 3; Am. iii. 1, 2; Jer. i. 15, *al.*

5. Behold, I am against thee. As ii. 14.

and I will uncover thy skirts (or **train**) **before thy face.** Cf. the very similar expressions in Jer. xiii. 22 (read 'uncovered'), 26 (read 'strip off . . . before'). The allusion is probably to the practice of exposing a woman convicted of unchastity (cf. Ez. xvi. 37; Hos. ii. 3): Nineveh has acted as a harlot, and must receive the punishment of a harlot. 'Before thy face' means, as a disgrace which thou must witness thyself. 'Discover' here in AV., RV. is an archaism, meaning to 'remove what served as a covering,' which occurs also in AV. of Jer. xiii. 22, 26 (where it is retained in RV. as here), Job xli. 13 (RV. 'strippeth off'), Ps. xxix. 9 (RV. 'strippeth bare'), Is. xxii. 8 (RV. 'took away').

thy nakedness and . . . thy shame: i. e. (dropping the figure) thy humiliation at the hands of the conqueror.

6. Further stages in the humiliation of Nineveh.

abominable filth. The rendering is unnecessarily strong. The Heb. is *detestable things*, which commonly means idols or things connected with idolatry (cf. on Zech. ix. 7): here the meaning is more general, **loathsome things.**

make thee vile. Rather, 'treat thee with contumely' or 'disgrace thee': cf. Dt. xxxii. 15 (RV. 'lightly esteemed'), Jer. xiv. 21 ('disgrace'), Mic. vii. 6 ('dishonoureth').

set thee as a gazingstock: to be looked at with derision. Cf. Ez. xxviii. 17 *end*; and the inscription of Mesha, l. 12 (see *DB.* iii. 407^{a}; *EB.* iii. 3045 f.): 'And I slew all the people from the city (Ataroth), a ***gazingstock*** unto Chemosh and unto Moab.'

look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is
laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek
comforters for thee? Art thou better than No-amon, that 8

7. All that see her will flee from her in horror and aversion; none will pity her; all will be only too ready to rejoice at her fall.

bemoan (better, **commiserate,**—*nūd* does not imply the idea of 'moaning') . . . **comforters.** Cf. Is. li. 19; Job ii. 11.

8–10. Has Nineveh any reason to expect a better fate than No (Thebes) in Egypt, which, in spite of the god who was its protector, and its strong material defences, had been taken by Asshurbanipal some fifty years before (B. C. 663)[1]?

8. Art thou better? i. e. better placed and protected.

No-amon. Rather, **No of Amon,** or **Amon's No.** Amon (or Ammon) was the name of the tutelary god of No, in whose honour had been built the immense temple, with its façades, columns, and huge hypostyle hall covering more than an acre of ground, which is still the wonder of Karnak. The expression thus suggests that No was specially under Amon's protection[2]. 'No' is the Egyptian *Net*, 'city'; and the city here referred to was called by the Egyptians (see *DB.* s.v.) sometimes *N.t rs.t*, 'southern city,' sometimes *N.t Ymn*, 'city of Amon,' as here, sometimes simply *N.t*, the 'city' *par excellence* (so Jer. xlvi. 25; Ez. xxx. 14[3], 15[3], 16). By the Greeks it was called Thebes: it was the great and celebrated capital of Upper Egypt, situated far up the Nile (some 400 miles above Cairo), in the centre of a broad green plain, into which the Nile-valley here expands, the capital of the brilliant rulers of the 18th, 19th, and 20th dynasties, who constructed there the great temples, with their halls, colonnades, colossal statues, obelisks, and sculptures, on a scale of imposing magnificence, to which there is probably no parallel in the world. The city proper lay on the E. bank of the Nile—here a stream nearly half a mile broad, which, just at Thebes, broadens out so as to enclose three islands—the extensive ruins of Luxor and Karnak (one and a half miles N. E. of Luxor) marking its site; there was a suburb (now Ḳurnah) on the opposite side of the river, but this consisted chiefly of an immense necropolis, there being in front a long row of temples devoted to the worship of former kings, and behind them thousands of tombs (many of which have recently been excavated), hewn out in the gorges and rocky sides of the

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[1] See particulars above, p. 6.

[2] The mediaeval Jews identified *Amōn* here with the Hebrew *hāmōn*, 'multitude': hence the rendering of AV. '*populous* No.'

[3] Where notice in the Hebrew for 'multitude' (*hāmōn*) the play upon 'Amon.'

was situate among the [a] rivers, that had the waters round about her; whose rampart was [b] the sea, *and* her wall
9 [c] was of the sea? Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength,

[a] Or, *canals* See Ex. vii. 19. [b] That is, the Nile.
[c] Some ancient versions have, *was the waters.*

Libyan hills[1]. The comparison is the more apposite, as Thebes had been the capital of great conquering dynasties, who had beautified it from the wealth gained in their wars, and erected in it the magniloquent records of their successes, just as the Assyrian kings had done in Nineveh.

that was situate. *Lit.* 'that sat' or 'dwelt,' viz. proudly and securely. The city is almost personified: cf. Is. xlvii. 8 RVm.

upon the rivers. Render, **upon the Nile-streams** (plur. of *ye'ōr*, the regular Hebrew word for the Nile, and usually denoting arms, or canals running into it, as Ex. vii. 19). The Nile, as remarked above, does divide into two or three streams at Thebes, but it may be doubted whether Nahum was aware of this fact. Rather, he knew that Thebes was on the Nile, and he uses the plural to amplify the picture.

rampart. Heb. *ḥēl*, the outer, smaller wall, in front of the principal wall: so 2 S. xx. 15; Ps. xlviii. 13 (RV. 'bulwarks'), Lam. ii. 8 *al.*

the sea: i. e. the Nile, as Is. xviii. 2, xix. 5; Job xli. 31.

and **her wall was from the sea:** i. e. consisted of the sea (the Nile). But a simple change of vocalization, *and* **her wall was the waters,** greatly improves the clause, and avoids the repetition of the same word 'sea.' The position of the city is idealized: for the greater part of its circumference Thebes was not bounded by the Nile at all; and, according to recent authorities, was not protected by walls of any kind[2].

9. No was defended, further, by the number of gallant soldiers who served in her hosts.

Ethiopia. Heb. 'Kush,' as always (e. g. Is. xviii. 1; cf. Gen. x. 6). *Kush* (Egypt, *Kash*, *Kesh*) was the name of a people, whose home was on the S. of Egypt proper (S. of the First Cataract, lat. 24° N.), and whom the Egyptian kings often boast of subduing; but at the time here referred to (663 B. C.), Kush and Egypt were virtually one, the kings of the twenty-fifth or

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[1] W. M. Müller in *EB.* iii. 3428.

[2] Murray's *Hand-book to Egypt* (ed. 10, by Mary Brodrick, 1900), col. 776.

and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were thy helpers.
Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her 10
young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of
all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable
men, and all her great men were bound in chains. Thou 11
also shalt be drunken, thou shalt be hid; thou also shalt

Ethiopian dynasty having been on the throne of Egypt, with Thebes as their capital, since B. C. 715.

Egypt. The whole force of the world-renowned empire of Egypt was at her disposal, and could act as her defenders.

it was infinite. In the Heb. *there was no end*—the same phrase which occurs in ii. 9 (Heb. 10), iii. 3; also in Is. ii. 7 (twice).

Put and Lubim. Peoples of N. Africa, mentioned elsewhere also as contributing contingents to armies. *Put* is in Gen. x. 6 the third 'son' of Ham, next to Kush and Mizraim (Egypt); and the *Lubim* are very probably the same as the *Lehabim* of Gen. x. 13 (one of the tribes 'begotten' by Mizraim, i. e. a tribe contiguous to, or dependent on, Egypt). Put is named among the mercenaries of Tyre in Ez. xxvii. 10; as serving in the Egyptian army in Jer. xlvi. 9 'Cush and Put, that handle the shield' (cf. Ez. xxx. 5); and as forming part of the hosts of Gog in Ez. xxxviii. 5. The Lubim are mentioned otherwise only in very late writers (2 Ch. xii. 3, xvi. 8, Dan. xi. 43): they may well be the 'Libyans' of the classical authors.

thy helpers. Read, with LXX, 'her helpers.' No is spoken of, both before and afterwards, in the third person; the second person (*vv.* 8^a, 11) denotes Nineveh.

10. Yet, notwithstanding her queenly position, and the hosts of her defenders, Thebes was taken by the enemy; and her people were ignominiously carried into exile. Asshurbanipal (above, p. 6) speaks at length of the spoil which was carried off by him from Thebes; but it would hardly be inferred from the terms used by him that the population as a whole was taken into exile.

dashed in pieces. According to a barbarous usage of ancient warfare: cf. 2 K. viii. 12; Is. xiii. 16; Hos. xiii. 16.

at the top of all the streets. And so in the public view: cf. Is. li. 20; Lam. ii. 19, iv. 1.

and they cast lots, &c. Viz. for the nobles taken as captives: cf. Ob. 11; Joel iii. 3.

11–13. A similar fate will also be Nineveh's.

11. Thou shalt be drunken: viz. with the cup of Divine wrath, the figure being descriptive of the stupefaction produced by some dire calamity: see Jer. xxv. 15, 16, 27; Is. li. 17, 21

seek [a] a strong hold because of the enemy. All thy
12 fortresses shall be *like* fig trees with the firstripe figs:
if they be shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater.
13 Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women; the
gates of thy land are set wide open unto thine enemies:
14 the fire hath devoured thy bars. Draw thee water for
the siege, strengthen thy fortresses: go into the clay, and

[a] Or, *a defence against*

('drunken, but not with wine'), 22; Ez. xxiii. 33; Hab. ii. 15, 16; Ps. lx. 3; Lam. iv. 21.

thou shalt be hid. Interpreted to mean 'thou shalt disappear;' but the sense is a doubtful one, and the thought would come too early in the description (see the following clause). With the change of a letter, we could read 'thou shalt faint' or 'swoon,' prostrated by the disaster: cf. Is. li. 20 (where the context is similar).

thou also shalt seek (viz. in vain) **a strong hold** (or **place of refuge**[1]: cf. Is. xxx. 2^{b} RVm.) **from the enemy.** Fleeing, viz., before him.

12. The fortresses of Nineveh—i. e. probably, the forts and watch-towers, which, as existing mounds seem to show, guarded the approach to the capital—are compared to fig-trees with early figs upon them, which, when the trees are shaken, fall into the mouth of the eater; a figure of the ease with which they will be taken by the besiegers. For early, or first-ripe, figs, which were accounted a delicacy, cf. Is. xxviii. 4, Mic. vii. 1.

13. All the defences of Nineveh will fail her.

are women: i. e. feeble, powerless to resist the foe: cf. Is. xix. 16; Jer. l. 37, li. 30.

the gates of thy land. The mountain-passes, or other approaches of the country, defended very probably by fortresses. Cf. such expressions as the 'Caspian Gates,' the 'Caucasian Gates,' &c.

thy bars. Either *lit.* the bars of the gates of these fortresses, or fig. the bars of these 'gates,' or mountain-passes, i. e. the fortresses themselves (Hitz., Keil, Now.).

14. Let Nineveh, then, the country being thus open to the foe, prepare for the siege.

go into the clay, &c.: i. e. make bricks to repair old fortifications, or to construct new ones.

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[1] The Hebrew word may be derived either from עזז, *to be strong,* or from עוז, *to flee for refuge* (see Is. xxx. 2 RVm.; Jer. iv. 6, vi. 1).

tread the mortar, [a] make strong the brickkiln. There 15
shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off,
it shall devour thee like the cankerworm: make thyself
many as the cankerworm, make thyself many as the
locust. Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the 16

[a] Or, *lay hold of the brickmould*

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make strong the brickkiln. RVm. **lay hold of the brickmould** is preferable (see the writer's *Notes on the Hebrew Text of Samuel*, on 2 S. xii. 31).

15–18. But her preparations will be in vain: the multitudes of Nineveh, though they may be as numerous as locusts, will also disperse as rapidly as locusts; and her warriors will be laid low in the dust.

15. There, within thy strong defences, **will the fire devour** the city, and **the sword cut off** her inhabitants.

it shall devour thee like the young locust. As easily and quickly as the young locust devours grass and herbage. But the clause is rather redundant, and (with the 'young locust' following, in a different connexion) weak; and Wellh. may be right in regarding the two words of which (in the Hebrew) it consists as a gloss, suggested by the context, on 'devour' just before.

the young locust (Heb. *yeleḳ*, properly, as it seems, *the lapper*) is very probably the locust in its second or *pupa* stage of growth: see on *v.* 16.

make thyself many as the young locust, &c. The two imperatives are meant ironically (cf. the imperatives in 1 K. ii. 22; Am. iv. 4): 'though thou make thyself many as the young locust, &c., it will be of no avail: all will vanish away before the enemy.' 'Many' (twice) is lit. 'heavy,' i. e. a vast, compact mass[1].

16^a. The allusion is to Nineveh's having been a great com-

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[1] *vv.* 14–16 are much improved if, with Wellhausen, we redivide them and, omitting a letter in *v.* 16^a, get an imperative, 'make thyself many,' parallel to the two preceding imperatives:—

'Draw thee water for the siege, strengthen thy fortresses,
Go into the clay, and tread the mortar, lay hold of the brickmould:
There shall the fire devour thee, the sword shall cut thee off.

Make thyself many as the young locust,
Make thyself many as the locust,
Multiply thy merchants above the stars of heaven;
The young locust strippeth itself, and flieth away!'

stars of heaven: the cankerworm [a] spoileth, and flieth
17 away. Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy [b] mar-

[a] Or, *spreadeth himself* [b] Or, *scribes*

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mercial centre: caravan routes between E. and W. met there; the river was another great channel of communication; and her native manufactures were also celebrated (see further Dr. Pusey's note on this passage).

the stars of heaven. A figure of a countless multitude: Ex. xxxii. 13; Dt. i. 10 *al.*

16^b. The young locust strippeth itself[1]**, and flieth away.** The locust, when in its *pupa* stage, is able only to hop, its wings being enclosed in rough horny sheaths (cf. Jer. li. 27 'as the rough *yeleḳ*'): these, after about a month, it strips off, and then, being now the complete insect, it mounts quickly into the air, and flies away[2]. The rapidity with which a swarm of such locusts flies off is here a symbol of the rapidity with which the busy merchant population of Nineveh will melt away.

17. Thy crowned. The Heb. word occurs only here, and its meaning is uncertain. If the consonantal text is correct, this rendering may be retained (though it would be better to change the points[3]), the allusion being then to the diadem, or head-band, worn by the grand vizier[4], and perhaps by other high Assyrian officers of state. Or the word (with the same change of punctuation) might mean *thy separated* (or *consecrated*) *ones*, i.e. *thy princes* or *nobles* (cf. *nāzīr*, so rendered in Lam. iv. 6 RV., and RVm. of Gen. xlix. 26 = Dt. xxxiii. 16). But the possibility cannot be excluded that it is the Hebraized (or corrupted) form of some native Assyrian title (cf. the next note).

thy marshals. Heb. *ṭiphsar*, found besides only in Jer. li. 37. No doubt the Assyrian *dupsarru*, properly, *tablet-writer*, a very common word for *scribe* (e. g. the scribe of a contract or other deed), used here, it seems, of a military official, the muster-master, or 'marshal,' of an army; cf. the Heb. *sōphēr*, 'scribe,' in a similar application, Jud. v. 14 (see RVm.).

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[1] RV. text (= AV.) gives to the Hebrew verb used a sense borne only by the causative conjugation; RVm. is a sense found only in connexion with an army making a marauding incursion (e. g. 1 S. xxiii. 27 'make a raid').

[2] See Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*, p. 308; or the writer's *Joel and Amos* (in the *Cambridge Bible*), p. 85.

[3] מְנֻזָּרַיִךְ for מִנְּזָרַיִךְ.

[4] See Rawlinson, *Anc. Monarchies*, i. 499 f. (with illustrations).

shals as the swarms of grasshoppers, which camp in the [a]hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are. Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria: thy 18

[a] Or, *walls*

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as the swarms of grasshoppers. 'As grasshoppers[1].' Another of the many Heb. synonyms for 'locust[2],' some of which, it seems probable, denote different species, and others the same species in different stages of its development. The usual word is *arbeh* (*v.* 15 *end*, *v.* 17 *beginning*): this word (*gōbai*) occurs besides only Am. vii. 1, and in the plural, differently pointed (*gēbim*), Is. xxxiii. 4[3]. As we have in English only one word for 'locust,' we are compelled to represent *gōbai* here, inexactly, by 'grasshoppers.'

which camp on the walls (RVm.), &c.: i.e. the stone walls surrounding a field, especially one in which sheep were kept: Nu. xxxii. 16, 24; Zeph. ii. 6 *al.* ('folds')[4].

where they are: i.e. to which they have fled. Locusts are benumbed by cold, their wings becoming cramped and stiff. Thomson (*Land and Book*, p. 418 of the one-vol. edition), describing the advance of a swarm of locusts, says that in the evenings they literally 'camped' in the hedges and loose stone walls, covering them like a swarm of bees settled on a bush: if the next day was warm, they resumed their march, but if it was cold, the majority did not move at all, and those that did move crept along very slowly and heavily. Like the locusts which, after a cold night, fly off as soon as the sun begins to warm them, so will the Assyrian leaders vanish from Nineveh.

18. Thy shepherds. Fig. of leaders and rulers, as often in Jer. (e.g. ii. 8, xxiii. 1, 2, 4), and in Ez. xxxiv, the people being frequently at the same time represented as sheep (cf. here 'are scattered upon the mountains').

slumber. In death: cf. Ps. lxxvi. 5 ('they slumber their sleep'); also Jer. li. 39, 57; Ps. xii. 3.

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[1] The Heb. is *gōb gōbai*, and 'swarms of' in RV. (like 'great' in AV.) is an attempt to express *gōb*; but the word has no such meaning, and it is evident that it has simply arisen from the *gōb* of *gōbai* having been accidentally written twice over by error.

[2] See the writer's *Joel and Amos*, pp. 85 f.

[3] It is found also in the Aramaic of the Targums.

[4] This, and not 'hedge,' is the meaning of *gĕdērāh*: cf. 'build' in Nu. *ll. cc.* The masc. *gādēr* is used of a wall surrounding a vineyard, Nu. xxii. 24; Is. v. 5.

worthies are at rest: thy people are scattered upon the
19 mountains, and there is none to gather them. There is no assuaging of thy hurt; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee clap the hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?

thy worthies: cf. ii. 5.

are at rest. A doubtful paraphrase, *shākhan* meaning *to dwell* in a place, and, used absolutely, *to abide* or *continue* (as Ps. cii. 28) but hardly (in spite of Ps. lv. 6 [Heb.]) to 'abide *still*.' We should doubtless, omitting one letter, read **sleep.**

are scattered[1], &c. The fig. of a flock underlies the expressions used: cf. 1 K. xxii. 17, Ez. xxxiv. 6.

19. Nineveh's ruin is irreparable; and there is none who will not exult over her fall.

assuaging. The Heb. *kēhāh* cannot have this meaning[2]; read probably *gēhāh*, **healing** (Prov. xvii. 22 'medicine,' RVm. 'healing').

thy hurt. Properly, **thy breach,** i. e., as we should say, **thy wound.** Cf. Am. vi. 6 (AV. and RV., discarding the figure, 'affliction'); and especially in Jer., as vi. 14 (RVm.), viii. 21, x. 19 ('Woe is me for my *breach* (wound)! my stroke is grievous'), xiv. 17 ('the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great *breach*, with a very grievous stroke'), xxx. 12 ('thy *breach* (wound) is desperate, thy stroke grievous'); Lam. ii. 13.

thy wound is grievous. Better, **thy stroke is grievous** (lit. *made sick*): cf. Jer. x. 19, xiv. 17, xxx. 12, just quoted.

bruit. An archaism for 'report' (Fr. *bruit*, 'noise'), very common in writers of the sixteenth century. See in AV. Jer. x. 22, 2 Macc. iv. 39, viii. 7; *Troilus and Cressida*, v. 9. 4 'the *bruit* is, Hector's slain, and by Achilles'; and cf. Aldis Wright's *Bible Word-book* s. v.

clap the hands. In exultation (Ps. xlvii. 1), and derision (Ez. xxv. 6, where, however, the Heb. word for 'clap' is not the same).

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[1] Read נָפֹצוּ (as 1 K. xxii. 17, &c.), for the unknown נָפֹשׁוּ.

[2] *kāhāh* is *to be dim*, as of the eye, Gen. xxvii. 1; of a plague-spot, Lev. xiii. 6: but 'dimness' is a strange word to use for the assuaging of a wound.

HABAKKUK

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

HABAKKUK

INTRODUCTION

§ 1. THE PERSON OF HABAKKUK.

OF Habakkuk's[1] personal life nothing is known with certainty, though it has been inferred, from the fact that he is termed specifically 'the prophet,' that he held a recognized position as prophet (i. 1, iii. 1), and from the expression 'on my stringed instruments' (iii. 19), that he was a member of the temple choir, and belonged, consequently, to the tribe of Levi. The first of these inferences is a possible one, though it does not add much to our knowledge of Habakkuk. The second is doubtful, if only on account of the uncertainty attaching to the pronoun 'my,' which is against the analogy of other similar notices (Pss. iv, v, &c.), and which moreover, even if correct, may refer not to the author of the ode but to the worshipping congregation.

Although, however, little is thus to be learnt of Habakkuk from the Old Testament itself, later Jewish *Haggadah* had much to tell of him. The most widely diffused legend about Habakkuk, often, for example, referred to by the Fathers, is that found in Bel and the Dragon (*vv.* 33 ff.), according to which the prophet, while carrying pottage to his reapers, was suddenly directed by an angel to carry it to Daniel, who had been cast a second time, by *Cyrus*, into the lions' den in Babylon: upon protesting that he had never seen Babylon, and did not know where the den was, he was lifted up miraculously by a lock of his hair (cf. Ez. viii. 3), and carried through the air to Babylon; having there provided Daniel with his repast, he was immediately taken back by the angel to his own place. In the Codex Chisianus of the LXX[1], the story of Bel and the Dragon is prefaced by the words *ἐκ προφητείας* Ἀμβακουμ *υἱοῦ* Ἰησοῦ, *ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς* Λευι, showing both that the story was taken from an apocryphal work attributed to Habakkuk and also that the prophet was described in it as the son of Jesus (i.e. Joshua, or Jeshua), and of the tribe of Levi. What authority there may have been for the statement about his father we do not know: the description of him as belonging to the tribe of Levi may be merely an inference from the expression in iii. 19, quoted above. According to the *Lives of the Prophets*, which, in two recensions, are attributed respectively to Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre (*d.* 362), and Epiphanius (*d.* 403), he was of the tribe of Simeon, *ἐξ ἀγροῦ* Βηθι *τοῦ* Καρ (Epiph. *ἐξ ἀγροῦ* Βηθζοχηρ), which Delitzsch thinks may be the Beth-Zachariah of 1 Macc. vi. 32, 33, the modern Beit-Sakariyeh, ten miles SW. of Jerusalem, though this, it is true, would be not in Simeon, but in Judah. In the same 'Lives' it is further stated that when Nebuchadnezzar advanced against Jerusalem, Habakkuk fled to Ostrakine (now Straki), on the Egyptian coast, twenty-six miles W. of the Rhinocorura, but that, after the Chaldaeans had withdrawn, he returned to his own land, where he died and was buried, two years before the return of the Jews from Babylon in 537. Eusebius, in his *Onomasticon*, states in one place (p. 246) that his tomb was shown at Gabatha (Gibeah), elsewhere (pp. 256, 270), that it was shown at Echelah, or Keeila (Keilah)—twelve and eighteen miles, respectively, SW. of Jerusalem. What value all these statements possess we do not know.

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[1] The form of the name is peculiar, and its meaning is uncertain.

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[1] Swete, *The O. T. in Greek*, vol. iii, pp. xii, 586.

§ 2. DATE OF HABAKKUK, AND CONTENTS OF HIS PROPHECY.

Habakkuk prophesied most probably about 600 B.C. The times were anxious ones; and the perplexities and questionings to which they gave rise are reflected in his prophecy. Twenty-one years had elapsed since the discovery of Deuteronomy in the temple in the eighteenth year of Josiah (B.C. 621), and nine since the death of Josiah at Megiddo (609), when he went to oppose Pharaoh-Necho in his effort to annex all Syria as far as the Euphrates to his dominion. Jehoahaz, Josiah's third son, upon whom the popular choice fell as his successor, after a three months' reign—in the course of which, it may be presumed, he had pursued an anti-Egyptian policy—was summoned by Necho to appear before him at Riblah (on the Orontes), only to be thrown there into chains, and carried away into Egypt, while a heavy fine was imposed upon Judah. His elder brother Eliakim was then put on the throne, his name being changed by the Pharaoh to Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim was a selfish and tyrannical ruler. At a time when the country was impoverished by the collection of the tribute imposed by Necho he developed a passion for regal magnificence; as Jeremiah tells us (xxii. 13–17), he built by the forced, but unpaid, labour of his subjects a spacious palace 'panelled with cedar, and painted with vermilion'; he moreover abused his position to indulge in the common vices of an Oriental despot—his eyes and his heart were set only 'upon dishonest gain, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression and for violence, for to do it.' Nor were such crimes confined to the king. As allusions in Jeremiah show clearly, the reformation of Josiah (620) had affected the masses only superficially: though there were still faithful souls left, lawlessness, injustice, dishonesty, and oppression were only too rife in the nation at large, and idolatry was widely and openly practised (Jer. xi. 10 ff., xiv. 7, 10–12, 20; perhaps also vii. 5–11). Meanwhile, political movements of importance had been taking place in the East. In 625[1] Nabopolassar, a man of enterprise and energy, had become ruler of Babylon; and though at first nominally viceroy under the suzerainty of Assyria, he had in 612 or 611, if not before, declared his independence. A year or two afterwards Sin-shar-ishkun, the last king of Nineveh, invaded Babylonia for the purpose of recovering his supremacy; but the Umman-manda (p. 10), called in by Nabopolassar to assist him, overran Assyria and laid Nineveh in ruins (607). In 605 Necho, again endeavouring to assert his claim to the country west of the Euphrates, sustained a crushing defeat at Carchemish, on the upper course of the Euphrates, at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, acting as general for his father Nabopolassar[2]. This victory of Nebuchadnezzar was the turning-point in the history of the age. It meant that the Chaldaeans were destined to acquire supremacy over the whole of Western Asia. Jeremiah, especially, quickly perceived that this was inevitable: he accepted it at once as providentially intended, and counselled his people to accommodate themselves to circumstances, and acquiesce in a position of dependence upon the Chaldaeans (Jer. xxv, xlvi). In point of fact, the countries west of the Euphrates probably at once submitted[3]. Jehoiakim, it is expressly stated (2 K. xxiv. 1), became Nebuchadnezzar's servant for 'three years'—though which three years these were between 605 and his death in 597 is not known: then he 'turned and rebelled against him.' The consequences of Jehoiakim's revolt were—first, the guerilla war mentioned in 2 K. xxiv. 2; next, almost immediately after

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[1] See above, p. 9.

[2] Nabopolassar died a month or two after the battle of Carchemish, and was succeeded on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar (605–561).

[3] Cf. the writer's *Daniel* (in the *Cambridge Bible*), p. 2, with the references, especially 2 K. xxiv. 7.

Jehoiachin's accession in 597, a siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldaeans, resulting, in the third month of Jehoiachin's reign, in the deportation of the king and the *élite* of the capital to Babylon; and finally—in consequence of Zedekiah's pursuing the same anti-Chaldaean policy as Jehoiachim, and refusing to listen to Jeremiah's counsels—the capture and destruction of Jerusalem, and second deportation of captives to Babylonia, in 586.

It is to be regretted that we have not further particulars of Nabopolassar's rule. Did we know more of the military expeditions in which he was engaged, we might be better able to appreciate Habakkuk's allusions to the prowess and conquests of the Chaldaeans. As it is, almost the only exploit of the Chaldaeans, prior to the two sieges of Jerusalem, of which we have actual information, is the victory over Necho at Carchemish. To judge from 2 K. xxiv. 1, the Chaldaean arms were not seen in Judah itself before 602 B.C.,—possibly, indeed, not before 598—according to the date at which the three years' vassalage mentioned in that verse terminated. Our knowledge of the times is not minute enough to enable us to fix dates with precision: but Hab. i. 5–11, it is natural to suppose, was written shortly after the battle of Carchemish in 605 (so Davidson), when the first rumours of the character and military capacities of the Chaldaeans reached Judah, but before the formidable dimensions which their power would shortly ('in your days,' *v.* 5) assume, had yet been realized. Hab. i. 12 ff., ii, presupposing a time when the Chaldaeans had made more conquests, and when men had become familiarized with their tyrannical treatment of subject nations, may have been written some years later (cf. p. 57), though before the end of the Chaldaean rule could be regarded as at all immediate, on account of ii. 3.

The Book of Habakkuk opens with a dialogue between the prophet and his God (cf., for the form, Jer. xiv–xv, Mic. vi. 1—vii. 6, vii. 7–20). The prophet begins (i. 2–4) by complaining to Yahweh for permitting lawlessness and social disorder to continue so long unchecked in the land. Yahweh replies (i. 5–11) by pointing to the Chaldaeans, the powerful and terrible people whom He is raising up to be the ministers of judgement. But the answer involves a fresh perplexity. How can the pure and holy God employ as His instruments this proud, idolatrous nation, which destroys the righteous with the wicked, and tramples inhumanly, not upon Israel only, but upon all the nations of the known world? Is not this the prevalence of wrong upon a larger scale? (i. 12–17).

Habakkuk's complaint being ended, he places himself in imagination upon his prophetic watch-tower (cf. Is. xxi. 6), and looks out to see what answer he may receive to it (ii. 1). Yahweh's answer, the significance of which is marked by the emphasis with which it is introduced, is this: *The soul of the Chaldaean is elated with pride; but the righteous will live by his faithfulness*,—i. e. by his moral steadfastness and integrity (ii. 2–4). The different characters of the Chaldaean and of the righteous carry in them their different destinies: the pride of the former, it is implied in particular, will prove in the end his ruin. There follows (ii. 5–20) a series of 'woes,' in which the prophet singles out, and threatens with retribution, the crying sins of the Chaldaeans—their insatiable lust of conquest, the ruthlessness with which they plundered the nations, the crimes and injustice by which they had established their empire and beautified their cities, their savage triumph over the nations which fell into their power, and their insensate idolatry.

Chap. iii consists of a lyric ode, of remarkable sublimity and poetic force, in which the poet first (*v.* 2) entreats Yahweh to interpose on His people's behalf, and afterwards (*vv.* 3–15) describes, as in a vision (*v.* 7), in an imaginative form, how he pictures his prayer as being answered. The prophet imagines a theophany; and depicts, in brilliant imagery, Yahweh's approach amid the accompaniments of a great thunderstorm, from His ancient seat in Edom (Dt. xxxiii. 2, Jud. v. 4), and His progress over the earth, for the deliverance of His people and the discomfiture of their foes. The poet closes (*vv.* 16–19) with a description of the effect which the vision of judgement wrought upon himself: on the one hand, it filled him with agitation and alarm; on the other hand, it evoked in him a joyous confidence that, whatever happened, Yahweh would remain His people's salvation.

§ 3. SOME CRITICAL QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK.

The explanation of chap. i given above, and adopted also in the notes, is the usual one; but, as even Davidson (p. 46) admits, 'there are very great difficulties connected with the exposition of the prophecy'; and it is fair to state that it has failed to satisfy most recent scholars. Thus (*a*) whereas in i. 5, 6 ('Behold, I am raising up,' &c.), the advent of the Chaldaeans seems still to lie in the future, elsewhere, and especially in i. 13–17, ii. 8^{a}, 10, 17, the prophet describes their treatment of conquered nations, and reflects upon the moral problems to which this gave rise, in a manner which seems to imply that they had been for some time on the stage of history; indeed ii. 17 ('the violence done to Lebanon shall cover thee') plainly implies that their armies had reached Palestine. (*b*) If i. 2–4 be the prophet's complaint respecting wrongdoing prevalent in Judah, which (i. 5–11) is to be punished by the Chaldaeans, how can he consistently complain of the Chaldaeans' treatment of his people, and pronounce judgement upon them on account of it? (*c*) We should expect the subject of the complaint in ii. 1 (the Chaldaeans' unjust treatment of Israel) to be the same as that of i. 2–4, whereas, upon the usual explanation of i. 2–4 (wrongdoing in Israel), it is different.

(*d*) The 'wicked' and the 'righteous' would naturally be the same, respectively, in i. 6 and i. 13, whereas upon the ordinary interpretation they are the wicked and the righteous in Israel in i. 4, and the Chaldaeans and Israel [or, and the righteous generally] in i. 13. Upon these grounds it was argued by Giesebrecht in 1890 that the true sequel to i. 4 was i. 12, that i. 5–11 (announcing the *advent* of the Chaldaeans) was a complete, independent prophecy, written *before* the rest of chaps. i–ii, and not now in its original place, and that i. 2–4 describes the tyranny of the *Chaldaeans* (*vv.* 2, $3^{a,b}$, 4^{b}), and its effects as shown in the relaxation of law and religion in Judah (*v.* 4^{a}),—the 'wicked' in *v.* 4^{b} being now the Chaldaeans, and the 'righteous' Israel. Wellhausen and Nowack agree with Giesebrecht, treating i. 5–11 as the older prophecy, and regarding i. 2, $3^{a,b}$ $4^{a,b}$ as continued by i. 12^{a} (to 'mine Holy One'[1]), 13–17, &c.; also, in so far as they hold i. 5–11 to be out of place where it now stands, Budde and G. A. Smith (see p. 58).

There is unquestionably force in Giesebrecht's argument; and were it not for the interpretation of i. 2–4 which it involves, the present writer would not hesitate to accept his conclusion. But though the 'violence' &c. of *vv.* 2, $3^{a,b}$ might in the abstract denote the tyranny of the Chaldaeans, how can the 'strife' and 'contention' of *v.* 3^{c}, and the slack *tōrāh* and perverted judgement of *v.* $4^{a,c}$, be regarded naturally as the effects of it? Nowack, feeling these difficulties, follows Wellhausen in expunging *vv.* 3^{c}, 4^{c} as glosses, and understanding *tōrāh* and *mishpāṭ* in *v.* 4^{a} as merely synonyms for religion generally (Is. xlii. 1, 4, li. 4), which, in consequence of the Chaldaeans' triumph over Judah, came to be questioned or rejected. But the excision of *vv.* 3^{c}, 4^{c} is a violent measure; and Is. xlii. 1, 4, li. 4 are a doubtful support for this generalized sense of *tōrāh* and *mishpāṭ*. On the other hand, it is true that i. 5–11 does seem to spring out of a different historical situation from i. 13–17, ii. 5 ff. For those who cannot accept the view just mentioned, perhaps the simplest explanation of the fact will be to suppose that i. 2–4 (as ordinarily understood), 5–11 was actually written by Habakkuk before i. 12 ff.: the book, as Kirkpatrick observes[1], 'is the fruit of religious reflection, and exhibits the communing and questioning of the prophet's soul with God,' which may represent a prolonged mental struggle, and have extended over a considerable time (notice the terms of i. 2): thus i. 2–11 may reflect the impression left upon his mind, when he first thought of the Chaldaeans as appointed for the punishment of Israel's sin, and i. 12 ff. may express the perplexity which he became conscious of afterwards when the character of the Chaldaeans became more fully known to him. Other suggestions that have been made are (Baudissin, *Einl.* p. 540) that Habakkuk in i. 5–11 quotes an older prophecy of the rise of the Chaldaeans, for the purpose of thus indirectly pointing to the astonishing character of their 'work' as Yahweh's ministers, although this work when he wrote was an accomplished fact; or (Kuenen, Davidson, pp. 48, 49 f., 55—though allowing this construction of the book to be somewhat artificial) that the prophet (whose main object is to foretell the *fall* of the Chaldaeans) may describe the moral cause of their *rise* by dramatically representing it as having been revealed to him by Yahweh in the past. Any one of these suppositions would remove what is the great difficulty of chap. i, by throwing back i. 5–11 to a date anterior to i. 12 ff. Nor does there seem to be any intrinsic reason why 'righteous' and 'wicked' should refer to the same persons, respectively, in i. 4 and i. 13: the prophet might indeed describe Israel (i. 13) as relatively 'more righteous than' the Chaldaeans; but would a contemporary of Jeremiah speak of Israel absolutely as 'the righteous'? (i. 4).

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[1] The rest of *v.* 12 being rejected as a later gloss, interrupting the connexion. *Vv.* 3^{c} and 4^{c} are also regarded as glosses.

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[1] *The Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 268.

On Budde's very original view of Hab. i–ii,—viz. that i. 2–4, 12–17, ii. 5–20 referred originally to the *Assyrians*, and was only afterwards accommodated to the Chaldaeans, and that the original order was i. 2–4, 12–17, ii. 1–4, i. 6–11 (the Chaldaeans announced as the destroyers of the Assyrians); ii. 5–20 (woes directed against the Assyrians),—followed virtually by G. A. Smith, pp. 119 ff., 132 ff.: see his article 'Habakkuk' in *EB.*, and the criticisms of Davidson, pp. 50 ff., and of Peake in *The Problem of Suffering in the O. T.* (1904), pp. 4–11, 151 ff. (who himself agrees substantially with Giesebrecht). Another solution of the problem of Hab. i–ii is offered by W. B. Stevenson, *Expositor*, May 1902, pp. 388 ff. (i. 2–4, 12–13, and i. 5–11, 14–17 [with 'and he maketh' for 'and makest' in *v.* 14,—the change in the Hebrew is only of one letter], two distinct, unconnected prophecies).

Marti, the most recent commentator upon Habakkuk, considers the elements contained in the book to be too dissimilar for its unity to be maintained; and analyses chaps. i–ii as follows:—

1. The genuine prophecy of Habakkuk, announcing the appearance of the Chaldaeans upon the stage of history, and dating shortly after the battle of Carchemish (B. C. 605), i. 5–10, 14 [with 'and he maketh']–16. *Vv.* 11 [the verbs being translated as pasts], 12^b (from 'O LORD'), 17 are later additions, written at a time when the victories of the Chaldaeans were matter of history.

2. A series of woes directed against the excesses of the Chaldaeans, and announcing their approaching fall, ii. 5–19 (with a few glosses; *v.* 20 is a later addition, leading on to ch. iii). These 'woes' could not have been written 'in the same breath' with No. 1, which announces the Chaldaeans as appointed by Yahweh to execute judgement upon Judah, but must date from a time considerably later, when their empire was waning to its close (*c.* 540) [? later than is necessary].

3. A psalm (post-exilic), dealing with the problem arising out of the sufferings of the righteous, and stating the solution which the prophet received, i. 2–4, 12^a (to 'Holy One'), 13, ii. 1–4. The present disarrangement of the text of the Psalm is ingeniously explained by the supposition that it was written originally on the three margins of the manuscript containing i. 5–10, 14–16, from which it was carelessly incorporated into the text by a scribe.

Marti undoubtedly succeeds in extracting from chaps. i–ii three consistent and logical wholes; but the dislocation which has to be postulated for No. 3 is too improbable. On the whole, the reader will perhaps be disposed to agree with Prof. Davidson when he says (p. 55) that the ordinary view of chaps. i–ii,—at least with the slight modification suggested above on p. 57,—'has the fewest difficulties.'

(2) In chap. ii many recent scholars have thought some, or even all, of the taunts in *vv.* 9–20 to be not part of the original prophecy of Habakkuk, but exilic, or post-exilic, additions. The grounds for these conclusions are, however, too slight to need detailed discussion here. They are strongest, perhaps, in the case of *vv.* 12–14, which it is urged, are deficient in originality, being in substance little more than variations of Mic. iii. 10, Jer. li. 58 (late exilic), and Isa. xi. 9. Habakkuk himself may, however, have adapted phrases from Micah and Isaiah; and, as Jer. l. 2–li. 58 is, from a literary point of view, anything but an original composition, it is at least equally probable that Jer. li. 58 is borrowed from Hab. ii. 13. See further Davidson pp. 56–58; *DB.* ii. 271.

(3) Whether the ode in chap. iii is really the work of Habakkuk may be more doubtful. The title and the musical notes (*vv.* 3, 9, 13, 19), both resembling closely those in the Psalter, suggest the inference that it was excerpted from a liturgical collection (in which it was already attributed to Habakkuk), and placed here by a compiler on account of its title (Kuenen, Wellhausen, Nowack, Marti, and others). It is further argued that the ode was originally an independent poem, unconnected with the prophecy of Habakkuk: it contains no allusions to the circumstances of Habakkuk's age, so clearly reflected in chaps. i–ii: the community is the speaker (*vv.* 14, 18, 19, and no doubt also in *vv.* 2, 16); it trusts that Yahweh will interpose in its behalf; but the descriptions of the foe (*vv.* 13, 14) are quite general, without any features pointing specifically to the Chaldaeans; and the comparison to a murderer delighting 'to devour the afflicted in a secret place' (cf. Ps. x. 8, 9) suggests

attacks made insidiously against the theocracy, rather than the open warfare of the Chaldaeans; while, at least in *v.* 17, the calamities referred to (failure of crops and flocks) are altogether different from those which were the burden of Hab. i–ii. The ode thus does not seem to reflect the historical situation of Hab. i–ii. Conversely, the promise in ii. 4, which is the prophet's consolation, does not at all suggest a theophany as its complement; and whereas in ii. 7 ff. the Chaldaeans are overthrown by the natural retribution which overtakes a despot when his power has become effete, the foe, in chap. iii, is overthrown by the direct interposition of Yahweh. No doubt it is true that the downfall of the Chaldaeans, though brought about by natural causes (ii. 7–8, &c.), might be represented as the result of a direct divine intervention (cf. Is. ii. 12 ff., xiii. 4 ff.); but even after making every allowance for the fact that chaps. i–ii are only elevated prose, while chap. iii is written in a lyric strain, it remains that the thoughts most characteristic of chaps. i–ii are not developed further in chap. iii, but are replaced by new ones. Wellhausen insists strongly that *vv.* 17–19 are not the original close of the poem, and that they cannot be used for determining the real aim and scope of *vv.* 2–16. If *vv.* 17–19 might be regarded as an appendix attached to *vv.* 2–16 by a later hand, one ground for doubting Habakkuk's authorship of the poem as a whole would certainly disappear. There would remain the other differences between chap. iii and chaps. i–ii, adverted to above; it is also doubtful whether the *nation*—supposing this to be intended by the term—would, before the monarchy had ceased to exist, be described as Yahweh's 'anointed' (*v.* 13). On the whole, however reluctant we may be to conclude that the ode in chap. iii is not the work of Habakkuk, it must be admitted that it contains features which make it difficult to affirm his authorship confidently (cf. Davidson, pp. 58 f.).

§ 4. THE THEOLOGICAL TEACHING OF THE BOOK.

Theologically, the different point of view of Habakkuk, as compared with Jeremiah, ought to be noticed. Jeremiah is so deeply impressed by the spectacle of his people's sin that he regards the Chaldaeans almost exclusively as the instruments of judgement; their destruction is seen by him only in the distant future, and is viewed rather as involved in God's purpose to restore His people than as a retribution for their own tyranny and excesses. Habakkuk, on the other hand, though not unmindful of Judah's faults (i. 2–4), is engrossed chiefly by the thought of the cruelties and inhumanities of the oppressor: an empire founded upon brutality and injustice is, in his eyes, doomed to fall; and the outraged nations of the earth execute the doom upon their tyrant, and give vent to their elation at his fall. Further, Habakkuk is conscious of a problem, a moral difficulty, which is not the case with Jeremiah[1]. The wrongdoing of the Chaldaeans is more unbearable than the evil it was meant to punish: hence their continued successes seem to the prophet inconsistent with Yahweh's righteousness, and it is the existence of this inconsistency which forms the motive of his book. Thus while Jeremiah bewailed the sins and coming misfortunes of his people, for their own sake, Habakkuk brooded over the moral problems which the contemplation of them raised in his mind. The age, we may be sure, was to all the faithful servants of God one of trial and perplexity; but, in virtue of their different temperaments and mental habits, the two contemporary prophets were impressed by different aspects of it, and were moved to extract from it different lessons.

The central and distinctive teaching of the book lies in the declaration of ii. 4 'Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not even in him; but the just will live by his faithfulness'[1]; and (as is shown in the note *ad loc.*) the true sense of this is that, while the wild excesses of the tyrant carry in them the germs of certain ruin, the 'faithfulness' of the righteous—i. e. his honesty, integrity, trustworthiness—will be to him a principle of life. It is evident that this declaration is no solution of the moral anomaly which the prophet discerns. The empire of the Chaldaeans might indeed, in virtue of its very nature, be doomed ultimately to perish: but it survived for sixty years; and meanwhile Habakkuk's compatriots, so far from abiding in peace and security, experienced the indescribable hardships of siege and exile. But 'live' is here used in the full and pregnant sense, which it has sometimes in the O. T. (e. g. in Ezek. xviii), of living in the light and consciousness of divine favour; and what Habakkuk promises is thus not *mere* material prosperity, but the moral security—of course often not unaccompanied by material happiness—which righteousness brings with it and secures, even in the midst of external calamities, and the sense of divine approval which, happen what may, never deserts it. The righteous man, even in normal conditions of society, endures where others fall; he escapes where others, as a consequence of their imperfect moral nature, are brought to ruin; while, even if calamities overtake him, he is still conscious of a moral triumph. It is enough for Habakkuk if he can mitigate the difficulty which pressed upon him, as it pressed, no doubt, upon many of his contemporaries, by recalling to them these two truths of God's providence—the doom which, if they will but wait patiently (ii. 3), they will find at last overtakes the tyrant, and the moral, if not the physical, security enjoyed by the righteous.

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[1] Except indeed in so far as it is exemplified in his own personal experience, in the impunity, viz., enjoyed by his own enemies (xii. 1–6).

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[1] The text and meaning of the first clause are not perfectly certain (see the note, p. 76); but the uncertainty does not affect the general sense of the verse.

In the New Testament the second clause of Hab. ii. 4 is quoted twice by St. Paul (Rom. i. 17, Gal. iii. 11), in the sense, ‘The just shall live by *faith*,’ in support of his doctrine of justification by faith; and the last clause of *v.* 3, and the whole of *v.* 4, almost as it stands in the LXX version (see below, p. 77), is quoted in Heb. x. 37 f., also to illustrate the benefits of ‘faith.’ This sense, though it can hardly have been intended by the LXX translators[1], whose version the Apostles used, was at any rate one which the Greek word used by them permitted; and it was accordingly adopted by St. Paul in his argument, and also by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in Heb. x. 38,—the pronoun ‘my,’ which is unfavourable to this interpretation, being omitted by St. Paul, and attached to ‘righteous’ in Heb. x. 38. But ‘faith’ is not the sense belonging to *’ĕmūnāh*. This does not mean that principle of trustful reliance upon another which we call ‘faith,’ but the quality of being oneself firm, steady, reliable in intercourse with others, i.e. trustworthiness, or ‘faithfulness.’ ‘A man of *faithfulness*,’ it is said in Prov. xxviii. 20, ‘aboundeth in blessings.’ ‘Lying lips,’ says another proverb (Prov. xii. 22), ‘are an abomination to the LORD, but they that do *faithfulness* are his delight.' The men to whom money was given for the repair of the Temple '*dealt in faithfulness*,' i. e. honestly (2 K. xii. 15 [Heb. 16], xxii. 7). 'Faithfulness' was an attribute of the ideal king, in his exalted office (Is. xi. 5). It was also a virtue which, Jeremiah tells us, though earnestly sought for by Yahweh, was sadly lacking in Jerusalem in his day (Jer. v. 1, 3, vii. 28, ix. 3,—all RVm.). The word is also used often of God's 'faithfulness' (Is. xxv. 1; Ps. lxxxix. 1, 2, 24, 33, &c.)[1]. The New Testament gives us what is really a *development* of the prophet's thought. St. Paul, familiar with the verse as it read in the LXX version, amplifies and spiritualizes the words of Habakkuk—as he does sometimes with other passages quoted by him from the O. T.—interpreting them in a sense which does not properly belong to them, but which, as it was permitted, or suggested, by the Greek, fitted them in that form for use in his argument. And the passage is interpreted similarly in Heb. x. 38.

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[1] Hab. ii. 4^b is rendered by the LXX *ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου* [מאמונתי for באמונתו] *ζήσεται*, i. e. ‘but the righteous shall live through [*lit.* from] my faithfulness.’ ‘Faithfulness’ is the general meaning of *πίστις* in the LXX: see e. g. 2 K. xii. 15, xxii. 7; 2 Ch. xxxi. 12, 15, 18; Ps. xxxii. (xxxiii.) 4; Hos. ii. 20 (22); Jer. xv. 18, xxxix. (xxxii.) 41; Lam. iii. 23 (*πολλὴ ἡ πίστις σου* [God’s]), in all (except the two passages from Jer.) for the same Heb. word אמונה as here. By the omission in Rom. i. 17, Gal. iii. 11, of the pronoun *μου* (‘my’), and by its being in Heb. x. 38 transposed so as to connect with ‘righteous,’ it becomes possible to understand *πίστις* in the sense of ‘faith.’

Πίστις, in the sense of ‘faith,’ is construed in the N. T. with a genitive of the person who is its object (e. g. Gal. ii. 16, 20, iii. 22; Phil. iii. 9): but the sense is there clear from the context, and the known use of the word by St. Paul; it could scarcely be so understood in the LXX of Hab. ii. 4.

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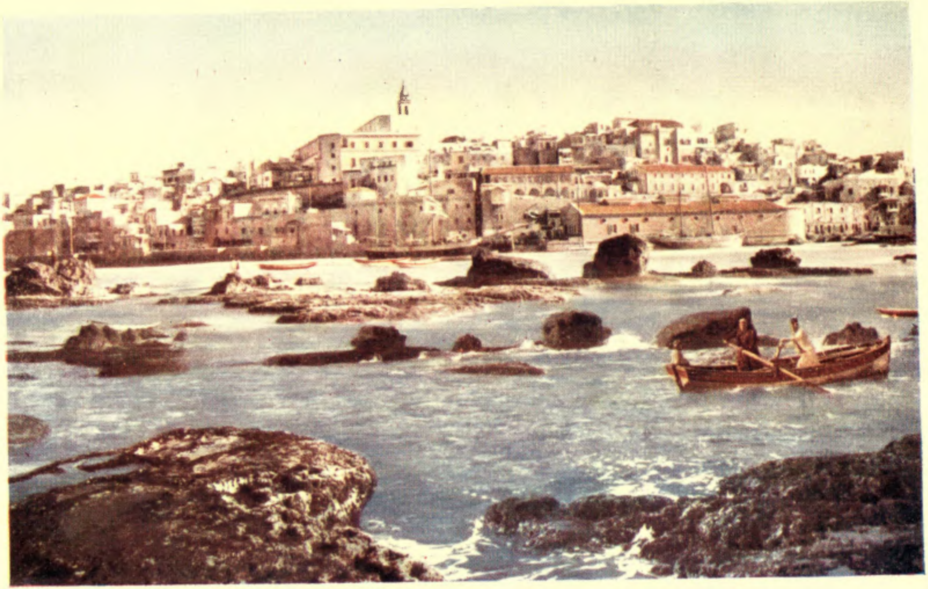
[1] Wellh. and Nowack understand אמונה in Hab. ii. 4 in the sense of *faithful allegiance* to God, in the firm assurance that in the end (cf. *v.* 3) the righteous cause will triumph, and the tyrant be overthrown. But, though a word, expressing the idea of *steadfastness* or *faithfulness*, might, no doubt, if limited to a relation towards a particular person, pass into that of *fidelity* or *loyalty* towards him, the O. T. furnishes no evidence that אמונה ever acquired this meaning.

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS.

$\mathbf{H}^1$	Earlier prophecy of Habakkuk.
$\mathbf{H}^2$	Later prophecy of Habakkuk.
A	Probable later Addition.



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JOPPA

HABAKKUK

THE [a] burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see. 1
[H^1] O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not 2
hear? I cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not
save. Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and [b] look upon 3

[a] Or, *oracle* [b] Or, *cause* me *to look*

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i. 1. The oracle . . . did see. See the first two notes on Nah. i. 1. The Book opens with a dialogue between the prophet and his God. The dialogue extends into ch. ii; and the subject of it is the moral difficulty which the prophet feels in Yahweh's first allowing lawlessness to prevail unchecked in Judah, and then entrusting the punishment of it to a cruel and godless nation like the Chaldaeans.

2–4. The prophet expostulates with Yahweh for permitting wrong to continue so long unchecked in Judah.

2. *How long, O Yahweh, do I cry for help, and thou hearest not?*
I cry unto thee, Violence! and thou dost not save.

The word rendered 'cry' in the first clause means always to *cry for help*: it occurs frequently in the Psalms, e. g. Ps. xviii. 6^a 41, xxii. 24: cf. Job xix. 7^b. With clause *b* cf. Job xix. 7, (RVm.), Jer. xx. 8. The complaint of the prophet is no doubt more than a merely personal one: he cries out in the name of his faithful compatriots, who have to suffer equally with himself from the violence and injustice of the wicked. To judge from the terms of the verse, the prophet has felt this moral anomaly long and keenly.

3. God the Holy One seems to look on quietly, and permit injustice and wrong to pass unpunished.

shew me: better, **cause me to see**—i. e. to behold it around me.

iniquity: *'āven* is not the regular Heb. word for 'iniquity,' but is a term of disparagement, meaning properly, it seems, *worthless conduct*, *naughtiness*. It occurs frequently in the Psalms. See the writer's *Parallel Psalter*, pp. 449 f.

and look upon: viz. without interfering to punish it. Contrast *v.* 13, Ps. x. 14. But probably, changing a letter, we should read with Targ., Pesh. 'and (why) *do I* look upon?'

perverseness? for spoiling and violence are before me:
4 and there is strife, and contention riseth up. Therefore
the law is slacked, and judgement [a] doth never go forth:

[a] Or, *goeth not forth unto victory*

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perverseness. Rather **mischief,** or, more clearly, **oppression:** cf. Is. x. 1. *'Āmāl* is properly *labour, toil* (Gen. xli. 51); then fig. *travail* (Is. liii. 11), *trouble,* whether experienced by oneself (Ps. lxxiii. 5), or prepared for others, and in the latter case commonly, for clearness, rendered *mischief* (Ps. vii. 4, 16, &c.). Here the sequel shows that the latter is the sense intended; for the combination with *'āven,* as here, cf. Ps. x. 7, lv. 10 (in a city).

spoiling and violence. So Am. iii. 10; Jer. vi. 7, xx. 8; Ez. xlv. 9. 'Spoiling' (Heb. *shōd*: 'destruction,' Isa. xiii. 6; 'desolation,' li. 19, lix. 7) means violent ill-treatment; 'violence,' wrong or injury, whether accompanied by force or not (*vv.* 2, 9, ii. 8, 17; Gen. xvi. 5, &c.).

and there is strife, &c. The consequences of so much violence and wrong: society is unsettled; disputes arise, and instead of being decided by law, they are perpetuated and spread. For the two words used see Prov. xv. 18, xxvi. 21.

4. Therefore direction is numb. The disorder and lawlessness prevalent in Judah incapacitated even the priests in the discharge of their duties. *Tôrāh* was the 'direction' given orally by the priest, chiefly on points of ritual observance, but including also a moral element: on the importance attached to it, and for other allusions to neglect in regard to it, see Mic. iii. 11; Dt. xvii. 11 (of judicial decisions), xxiv. 8; Jer. ii. 8, xviii. 18; Zeph. iii. 4; Ez. vii. 26, xxii. 26; Mal. ii. 6–9 (in EVV. 'law' and 'teach,' but 'direction' and 'direct' would be better). See further the article 'Law' in *DB.*, p. 65; and on Hag. ii. 11.

numb: i.e. chilled and paralysed, bereft of life and force, inefficient. Cf. Ps. xxxviii. 8 (RV. 'am faint'), lxxvii. 2 (RV. 'slacked').

judgement doth never go forth: i.e. *right* (Is. x. 2), both in a forensic sense, and also in social life generally, does not *come forth* (Ps. xvii. 2, xxxvii. 6) and assert itself, as it should do: cf. Is. lix. 14, and the picture in Mic. vii. 2–6, or Jer. ix. 3–5. The rendering of the margin is derived from the Aramaic sense of the root, *to conquer, be victorious,* which the word here used has in the late Hebrew of 1 Ch. xxix. 11, and which is also given to it in the Greek version of Is. xxv. 8 (which agrees with that of Theodotion), followed by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 54, 'death is swallowed up *in victory*' (cf. Hab. iii. 19, LXX τοῦ νικῆσαι for למנצח).

for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; there-
fore judgement goeth forth perverted. Behold ye among 5
the nations, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for [a] I
work a work in your days, which ye will not believe though
it be told you. For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that 6

[a] Or, *one worketh*

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compass about. In a hostile sense (Ps. xxii. 12), at once depriving him of his rights, and limiting his influence for good.

5-11. The answer of Yahweh to the prophet's complaint: already He is raising up the ministers of judgement, the Chaldaeans, a people mighty and terrible, imperious and all-subduing.

5. Behold ye among the nations: viz. to see what is there happening, to watch the storm of judgement arising, and advancing from nation to nation, till finally it breaks upon you (Jer. xxv. 32). 'Ye' (i. e. the Judahites) is to be taken closely with 'behold': the meaning is not 'Ye among the nations, behold.' Perhaps, however, with Nowack, Marti, and others, we should read, following the LXX, 'Behold, *ye faithless ones*[1] (i. e. ye faithless Judahites), and regard.'

I work. The marg. is added for a grammatical reason. 'Work' is in the Hebrew a participle, with no subject expressed; and in such cases a subject in the third person, not in the first, is usually understood (G.-K. § $116^{s, t}$). The general sense remains the same: for even though the grammatical subject be 'one,' the real agent is still implicitly Yahweh.

work a work. Both words are often used of a Divine operation, especially of one on a large scale: iii. 2; Is. v. 12; Ps. xliv. 1, lxiv. 9, xc. 16, xcv. 9.

ye will not believe, &c. Better, *ye would not believe* (viz. under other circumstances), *though it were told you*, i. e. unless you had express evidence of it. The following verses describe what this work is, viz. the establishment of the power of the Chaldaeans, with indirect allusion to the manner in which that would affect Judah.

6. For, lo, I am raising up. The words cannot refer to the first appearance of the Chaldaeans upon the stage of history (for Nabopolassar had been upon the throne of Babylon for some

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[1] בגדים for בגוים. The actual rendering of LXX is, 'Behold, ye despisers, and regard, and wonder marvellously, and perish'; but that 'despisers' is a misrendering of בגדים is apparent from *v.* 13. The words 'and perish' are an addition of the translators. The LXX rendering is followed (substantially) in the quotation in Acts xiii. 41.

bitter and hasty nation; which march through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs.
7 [a] They are terrible and dreadful: their judgement and

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[a] Heb. *He*, and so in vv. 8, 9.

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twenty years); but the Chaldaeans were for the Jews a new power—they had just gained a great victory over Egypt, and the expression rather means 'am raising up so as to establish and confirm.' The partic. after *lo* (or *behold*), as often, especially in prophecy, of the imminent future.

the Chaldaeans (Heb. **Kasdim**). *Kasdim* is the Heb. form of the Bab. and Ass. *Kaldû* (Χαλδαῖοι, 'Chaldaeans'), a tribe often mentioned in the Assyrian Inscriptions from about 880 B.C.: their home at that time was in Lower Babylonia (the Persian Gulf is called the 'sea of the land of the Kaldû'); afterwards, becoming more powerful, they gradually advanced inland; in 721 Merodach-baladan, 'king of the land of the Kaldû,' as he is called in the inscriptions, made himself for twelve years king of Babylon (cf. Is. xxxix. 1); and ultimately, under Nabopolassar (above, pp. 9, 52) and Nebuchadnezzar, the Kaldû became the ruling caste in Babylon. After Jehoiakim's revolt (2 K. xxiv. 1) they became the most formidable enemies of Judah; and in the end (B.C. 586) destroyed Jerusalem.

bitter: i.e. fierce, unpleasant to those who come in contact with it: cf. *bitter of soul* = angry, enraged: Jud. xviii. 25, 2 S. xvii. 8.

hasty: i.e. vehement, impetuous: in Is. xxxii. 4 (see RVm.) precipitate (in judgement).

which march, &c. Their object is conquest, to seize for a possession the dwelling-places of other peoples. The verbs and pronouns from here to the end of *v.* 11 (except *v.* 9 'their faces') are all singular in the Heb.) 'which marcheth . . . that are not its. It is terrible,' &c.), the nation being treated as a single whole. Similarly elsewhere, as Is. v. 26–30 (see RVm.), xvii. 13, 14 (RVm.), Jer. v. 16ᵃ, 17 (Heb.).

7. The formidable character of this nation: its military strength inspires terror into other peoples, and in its policy it is guided by no considerations except those proceeding from itself.

its right, &c. It is an imperious and autocratic nation: *its right*—the word (*mishpāṭ*) means properly the decision of a judge, and is then used in an extended sense of *right*, both legal and moral (cf. Is. x. 2; Jer. v. 28, xvii. 11)—*and its dignity* (Gen. xlix. 3) or *loftiness* (Job xiii. 11, xxxi. 23 [EVV. badly, *excellency*]) —i.e. its pre-eminence above other nations—*proceed from itself*, have their root only in itself, not in God: it owns no superior.

their dignity proceed from themselves. Their horses also 8
are swifter than leopards, and are more fierce than the
evening wolves; and their horsemen [a]spread themselves:
yea, their horsemen come from far; they fly as an eagle

[a] Or, *bear themselves proudly*

Cf. the words put by Isaiah into the mouth of the Assyrian, Is. x. 8–11, 13–14.

8–10. Their armies advance swiftly, and are irresistible.

His horses are swifter than leopards (מנמרים). Varied from Jer. iv. 13 'His horses are swifter than *eagles* (מנשרים).' The leopard is noted both for the swiftness of its course and also for the celerity with which it springs upon its prey[1]: it 'will take up its station in concealment by a village or watering-place, and await for hours its opportunity of pouncing upon the cattle' (Tristram, *NHB.* 112: cf. Jer. v. 6; Hos. xiii. 7).

are keener (viz. in attack: *lit.* 'sharper') **than evening wolves.** Wolves in the East conceal themselves during day, but prowl forth at nightfall and watch their opportunity of leaping suddenly into the fold, and seizing a sheep (Tristram, *NHB.* 152–4). Cf. Zeph. iii. 3.

spread themselves. This rendering, retained from AV., has no probability: RVm. **bear themselves proudly,** though not, perhaps, certain, is decidedly preferable; the correctness of the text, however, is not entirely above suspicion[2].

they come from far, &c. A point in the marvel: they come from far, like the eagle (cf. Dt. xxviii. 49 'from the end of the earth'), and, like the eagle, they light on the prey that they intend to devour. For the comparison cf. Dt. xxviii. 49; Jer. iv. 13, xlviii. 40 = xlix. 22 (of Nebuchadnezzar); Lam. iv. 19.

an eagle. Heb. *nésher*, more exactly[3], **a vulture**—not,

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[1] Cf. Oppian, *Kyneg.* 75 f., quoted by Bochart, *Hieroz.* ii. 104—

Ὠκύτατον θείει, καί τ' ἄλκιμον ἰθὺς ὀρούει,
Φαίης ὁππότ' ἴδοιο διηερίην φορέεσθαι.

[2] The verb (פוש) occurs twice besides, each time of an animal, Jer. l. 10 (RV. *are wanton*), Mal. iv. 2 (RV. *gambol*). In Arabic פוש means *to glory, boast, magnify oneself*; and this meaning would suit the three passages, but the sibilant in the Heb. does not correspond as it should do. Possibly, however, the Massorites are at fault in pointing שׁ. Here, however, the entire clause (ופשו פרשיו), which makes the verse unduly long, is open to the suspicion of being a corrupt anticipation of the following פרשיו; and we should perhaps read, with Wellh., Marti (after 'leopards'), '*and their horsemen are keener than evening wolves; they come from far,*' &c.

[3] See Mic. i. 16 'Enlarge thy baldness (viz. in mourning) as the

9 that hasteth to devour. They come all of them for violence; [a] their faces are set eagerly [b] *as* the east wind;
10 and they gather captives as the sand. [c] Yea, he scoffeth at kings, and princes are a derision unto him: he derideth every strong hold; for he heapeth up dust, and taketh it.
11 [d] Then shall he sweep by *as* a wind, and shall [e] pass over,

[a] Heb. *the eagerness* (or *assembling*) *of their faces is &c.*
[b] Or, *towards the east* Or, *forwards* [c] Or, *And they scoff &c.*
[d] Or, *Then shall the wind sweep by, and he shall pass away*
[e] Or, *transgress*

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however, the carrion-vulture, but the great vulture, or Griffon-vulture, a majestic bird constantly visible in Palestine, as it circles higher and higher in the heavens, and then rapidly (Lam. iv. 19; Job ix. 26) swoops down upon its prey (Tristram, *NHB.* 172-179).

9. their faces, &c. A most uncertain clause. Assuming the text to be correct, the most probable rendering would be (cf. RVm.), *the assembling*[1] *of their faces is eastwards*; but, as 'eastwards' is unsuitable, in view of the relative situations of Babylon and Judah, the very questionable alternative *forwards* (marg.) has been proposed. There must be some deep-rooted error in the text. No plausible emendation has hitherto been suggested.

as the sand: i. e. as innumerable as the sand: Gen. xxii. 17, xli. 49; Jud. vii. 12; 2 S. xvii. 11.

10. The Chaldaean mocks at all attempts to check his advance: kings and princes oppose him in vain, and every fortress he quickly reduces.

he heapeth up dust, and taketh it. His means are simple—nothing more than 'dust'—but effectual. The allusion is to the ancient method of taking cities by throwing up a long mound of earth from the lines of the besiegers, until it rose to the level of the city walls, so that the assailants, advancing along its top, could fight their way in. The technical expression is to 'throw up a mound' (spelt in EVV. *mount*): 2 K. xix. 32; Jer. vi. 6 *al.*

11. Then he sweepeth on like a wind, and passeth through,

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nésher'—a description satisfied by the Griffon-vulture, the head and neck of which are bald, and covered with down, instead of feathers, but not by the eagle (Tristram, *NHB.* 173).

[1] This rendering connects מְגַמַּת (which occurs only here) with the Arab. *jamma*, 'to be abundant'; 'eagerness' depends upon an assumed connexion with the Heb. גמא, 'to swallow down' (Job xxxix. 24), which is questionable philologically.

and be guilty: *even* he whose might is his god. [H^2] Art 12
not thou from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy
One? [a] we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained

[a] Or, According to an ancient Jewish tradition, *thou diest not.*

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and becometh guilty: this his might becometh his god. The fortress taken ('Then'), he sweeps on like a hurricane in his career of conquest; and, elated by victory, deifies his own might (*Dextra mihi deus*). The margins of RV. may be disregarded. But the text in parts of clause *a* is suspicious; and the correction (one letter only), *and maketh this his strength to be his god*, for 'and becometh guilty,' &c., is at least very probable.

12-17. But a fresh difficulty now arises: granted that Israel deserves punishment, how can the righteous Ruler of the world employ as His ministers this proud, idolatrous nation, which tramples down inhumanly and indiscriminately all men alike? Is this righteous judgement? Is it not rather the triumph of violence on a larger scale?

12. Can it be that Yahweh means Israel to perish? Surely He cannot intend that the Chaldaeans should do more than *correct* it? Cf. the same distinction in Jer. xxx. 11.

Art Thou not from of old, Yahweh, my God, mine Holy One? i. e. ('Yahweh' being the predicate) 'Art Thou not our national God, Yahweh, from of old?' The prophet in using the pronouns of the 1st pers. sing. speaks in the name of the nation: and, from the fact that Yahweh, the faithful and unchangeable One, has been from of old the national God of Israel (Hos. xiii. 4 RVm.), argues ('we shall not die') that it cannot be His intention that Israel should perish at the hands of the Chaldaeans.

from of old: *lit.* 'from before' or 'from aforetime.' The expression denotes what is ancient rather than what is eternal: it is often used, for instance, of the Mosaic age or other distant periods of Israel's past (e. g. Ps. xliv. 1, lxxiv. 2, 12); it is applied to God, as here, Dt. xxxiii. 27 ('The God *of old* is a dwelling place'), Ps. lv. 19[1].

mine Holy One: adapted from Isaiah's title of Yahweh, the 'Holy One of Israel,' Is. i. 4, v. 19, 24, &c.

we shall not die. According to Jewish tradition (cf. RVm.), this is one of eighteen passages called 'corrections of the scribes' (*tikkûnê sōpherim*), i. e. passages in which the original reading was supposed to have been altered by the scribes on account of its

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[1] It may even be applied to a former period of a single lifetime, Job xxix. 2.

him for judgement; and thou, O [a]Rock, hast established
13 him for correction. Thou that art of purer eyes than to
behold evil, and that canst not look on perverseness,
wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy peace when the wicked swalloweth

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[a] See Deut. xxxii. 4.

containing something which appeared to them to be unseemly or irreverent. The passages must be considered each on its own merits: in some cases, there may be some support for the allegation; in others, it is probably nothing more than a Jewish fancy. Here the original reading is alleged to have been '*Thou* wilt not die,' changed to '*We* shall not die,' on account of the irreverence implied in bringing together the ideas of God and death. The context, however, in this case lends no support to the view that this was the original reading; the deduction '*We* shall not die' is necessary to give point to the verse.

thou hast ordained, &c. 'Judgement' and 'correction' are the emphatic words: the Chaldaean, the prophet would fain believe, has been appointed by Yahweh to *judge* and *correct* Israel, but not to exterminate it (Jer. xxx. 11).

Rock. A poetical title of God, designating Him as the unchangeable support or refuge of His people—usually *the Rock of Israel*, or *his*, *my*, *their Rock*, or *the Rock of his* (*thy*) *salvation*, Dt. xxxii. 4 ('the Rock'), 15, 18, 30; 2 S. xxiii. 3; and often in the Psalms, as Ps. xviii. 2, 31, 47, xix. 14.

13. How, moreover, can Yahweh, the pure and Holy God, look on with unconcern (*v.* 3) while the Chaldaean outrages all right and justice?

perverseness. Rather, as *v.* 3, **mischief,** or **oppression.** The 'evil' and 'mischief' are here those wrought by the Chaldaeans.

them that deal treacherously: i. e. faithlessly, unconscionably, viz. in war. The expression is used also in Is. xxi. 2, xxiv. 16, xxxiii. 1, of ruthless, barbarous plunderers. Here it refers of course to the Chaldaeans.

holdest thy peace. Lookest on silently, without interfering: cf. Is. xlii. 14; Ps. l. 21.

the wicked. The 'wicked' is here (otherwise than in *v.* 4) the Chaldaean: the 'man that is more righteous than he' is generalized to include the other nations, victims of the Chaldaean barbarities, though Israel may be specially in the prophet's mind. But in *vv.* 12–17 the prophet speaks out of the heart of humanity. The anomaly is that the righteous God, whose nature cannot

up the man that is more righteous than he; and makest 14
men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that
have no ruler over them? He taketh up all of them with 15
the angle, he catcheth them in his net, and gathereth
them in his drag: therefore he rejoiceth and is glad.
Therefore he sacrificeth unto his net, and burneth in- 16

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endure wrong, looks on and is silent over this wrong which is as large as the human race' (Davidson).

14–16. The prophet's thought illustrated by a simile. Men are become like fishes, which the Chaldaean sweeps into his net, paying afterwards Divine honours to the instrument which thus enriches him.

14. and makest. Rather, **and hast made.** The condition is one which has already begun. It might be that the Chaldaeans were appointed to 'correct' (*v.* 12): but they had exceeded the terms of their commission (cf. Is. xlvii. 6); they had reduced men to the condition of fishes, without organization, without leaders, helpless before their captors. The prophet, with that disregard of secondary causes which is characteristic of Hebrew thinkers (cf. Am. iii. 6; Job ix. 24), boldly charges God with being the cause of all the outrages inflicted upon mankind by the Chaldaeans.

creeping things. An expression generally denoting *reptiles* (Gen. i. 26, vi. 7; 1 K. iv. 33), but used also of small aquatic creatures, Ps. civ. 25 ('wherein are *things creeping* innumerable'). It might be meant here in the former sense, as a parallel among land-animals to the 'fishes of the sea'; but the context, especially *v.* 15, rather favours the supposition that small marine animals are intended,—or at least that they are included in the expression.

no ruler. Cf. Prov. vi. 7 (of ants), xxx. 27 (locusts).

15. catcheth in: better, *sweepeth along* (Pr. xxi. 7) *with.*

in his drag. The Heb. word occurs only here, *v.* 16, and (with one vowel different) Is. xix. 8 ('nets'): LXX here and in one rendering of Is. xix. 8, σαγήνη, i. e. a large drag-net, or *seine* (Ital. *sagena*), whence the verb σαγηνεύω, to 'sweep clear' a conquered country (Hdt. iii. 149 *al.*).

he rejoiceth, &c. Exulting over his successful haul.

16. The Chaldaean deifies the instruments—i. e. his weapons of war—to which he owes his successes. Herod. (iv. 59, 60) states that the Scythians offered a yearly sacrifice of sheep and horses to the scimitar as the symbol of the war-god Ares: but whether a knowledge of this fact suggested the figure used by the prophet is uncertain; it may merely be another more pointed way of stating what was said before in *v.* 11, that the Chaldaean

cense unto his drag; because by them his portion is fat,
17 and his meat [a] plenteous. Shall he therefore empty his
net, and not spare to slay the nations continually?

2 I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the

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[a] Heb. *fat.*

so trusted in the material strength of his empire and army that it became to him his god. The description is spoken from the standpoint of a Hebrew prophet: the inscriptions of Nabopolassar (B.C. 625–605), and of his son Nebuchadnezzar, one of whom must have been on the throne when Habakkuk wrote, show that both were loyal and devoted worshippers of Marduk, Nebo, and Shamash, who, if their inscriptions had recorded victories, would, we may be sure, have gratefully attributed them to their help.

his portion is rich, and his food fat: i. e. his catch of 'fish,' fig. for the gains accruing to him from his conquests. In the Heb. there are two synonyms for 'fat,' which are perhaps best distinguished by the renderings here given. *Meat* in RV. (=AV.) is used in the now obsolete sense of the word (except in 'sweet*meat*') for food generally, not animal food in particular: so often in EVV., as iii. 17; Gen. i. 29; Is. lxii. 8.

17. Render: **Shall he therefore**—viz. because he thus rejoices over his gains, and honours his net as a god—**empty his net** (and, it is implied, go on casting it and filling it again), **and shall he continually slay nations unsparingly?** Giesebrecht, however, followed by Wellh., Now., Smith, Marti, making two slight changes, suggests, very cleverly, *Shall he for ever draw his sword, and continually slay nations unsparingly?* This yields a better sense than the Massoretic text, and may well be the original reading. For the rendering *draw* (of a sword), see Ex. xv. 9, Lev. xxvi. 33 *al.*

ii. 1–4. The prophet's 'complaint' (in ch. i) respecting the justice of God's government of the world, is ended; and he waits patiently, like a watchman on his out-look tower, to see what answer the Almighty may vouchsafe to it.

1. A soliloquy of the prophet. The figure is that of a watchman mounting a high tower in order to see afar (2 S. xviii. 24; 2 K. ix. 17); and it expresses the spiritual preparation of the prophet's soul, the earnest expectation with which he waits for the Divine answer: he will retire from the distracting crowd, will direct his gaze to heaven, and look out till the answer comes.

I will stand, &c. The prophet describes indirectly what he has done by citing the resolve which he had made to do it.

watch. Better **post,** lit. *place to be guarded* or *kept* (cf. 2 Ch.

[a] tower, and will look forth to see what he will speak
[b] with me, and what I shall answer concerning my complaint. And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the 2
vision, and make it plain upon tables; that he may run
that readeth it. For the vision is yet for the appointed 3

[a] Or, *fortress* [b] Or, *by*

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vii. 6 ('the priests were standing *upon their posts*'). Exactly so, Is. xxi. 8, in a similar connexion (EVV. *ward*).

the tower. Better, **the muniment:** cf. Nah. ii. 1—some part of the fortifications on which a watchman might naturally place himself.

look forth: viz. as a watchman, the word being that of which the ordinary Heb. word for 'watchman' is the participle: cf. the term 'watchman' used of the prophets, Jer. vi. 17; Mic. vii. 4; Ez. iii. 17; Is. lvi. 10; and see especially Is. xxi. 6–9.

with me. This is better than the marg. *by me*: cf. Zech. i. 9; and see Dr. Gray's note on Num. xii. 2.

what I shall answer to my complaint, or, better, **to my reproof** (Pr. i. 23, and often), or **impeachment,** viz. of God, that He leaves the wicked unpunished, and even entrusts to him the punishment of the righteous (i. 13–17). Pesh. for 'I shall answer' has **he will answer,** which agrees better with 'he will speak,' and is probably correct.

2. Yahweh's answer, heard by the prophet's mental ear. The significance of this answer is betokened by the terms in which it is introduced: it is to be written, viz. on tablets, in order that all may read it easily, and also because it will only be fully verified in the future, when the tablets will be evidence that the prophet has spoken it (cf. Is. xxx. 8).

the vision: i. e. the prophecy, or revelation: cf. on Nah. i. 1.

tables: as in Luke i. 63 AV., an archaism for **tablets;** cf. Is. viii. 1, xxx. 8. **Make it plain,** as Dt. xxvii. 8.

that he may run, &c. That he who readeth it may run, —viz. in his reading, i. e. may read it fluently, without being hindered by any indistinctness in the writing.

3. For the vision is still for the appointed time: it still relates to the time appointed by God for its fulfilment; there is an **end,** or goal, towards which **it** still **presseth,** and which, though it may be far distant, and the time of waiting may seem long, it still will not fail to reach.

hasteth. Or, **presseth:** *lit.*, if the text be right (for the figure is rather a strange one), **puffeth** or **panteth** (Ps. xii. 5 RVm.); cf. the Lat. *inhiare.* The prophecy is, as it were, personified, and represented as pressing on eagerly to its accomplishment.

time, and it [a] hasteth toward the end, and shall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it
4 will not delay. Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not [b] upright in him: but the just shall live [c] by his faith.

[a] Heb. *panteth.* [b] Or, *straight* [c] Or, *in his faithfulness*

will not lie: i. e. will not deceive, or disappoint, those who trust in it, will not fail. Cf. (of waters) Is. lviii. 11 (EVV. 'fail').

tarry: linger (Gen. xliii. 11) would perhaps be better.

come: i. e. *come to pass, be fulfilled,* as Dt. xviii. 22 *al.*

delay. Or, **be late:** *lit.* 'be behind,' arrive after its appointed time (2 S. xx. 5).

4. The contents of the 'vision.' **Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not even in him; but the just** (or, **the righteous**) **will live by his faithfulness.** The pronoun *his* refers to the Chaldaean, so that the meaning is: *The soul of the Chaldaean is elated with pride; but the righteous will live by his faithfulness.* The words express a moral distinction; and the distinction carries with it the different destinies of the Chaldaean and of the righteous; destruction (it is implied) for the one, and life for the other. But the distinction is one which may not be verified at once; the destruction of the Chaldaean may be deferred for many years; hence the stress laid in *v.* 3 on the need of patience.

even. Or *smooth, plain* (cf. Pr. xi. 5 RVm.; Is. xl. 3 RVm.), also (RVm.) *straight* (Ez. i. 7), and so (in a moral sense) *upright*: the antithesis of 'swollen' or 'puffed up' (assuming this word to be correct [1]) is an indication that the physical idea of the word is predominant, though the other, doubtless, is also present as well.

faithfulness. Not 'faith,'—for which (Davidson) 'Heb. has no word.' אמונה means primarily *steadiness, firmness,* in a physical sense (Ex. xvii. 12, of the hands of Moses): then, as a moral quality, *steadfastness, trustworthiness, faithfulness*; see especially 2 K. xii. 15 [Heb. 16], xxii. 7, 'dealing in *faithfulness*' (in handling money), where we might say 'honestly'; often parallel with 'righteousness,' 1 S. xxvi. 23; Is. xi. 5; Jer. v. 1 RVm.; Is. lix. 4

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[1] The pron. 'his' has no antecedent: and there is force in the remark (We., Dav.) that we want a *substantive* to which this pron. may refer: עַוָּל for עֻפְּלָה has been suggested—'Behold, as for *the unrighteous,* his soul is not even (*or* upright) within him.' The predicate, 'is not even (*or* upright),' is, however, in this case rather weak. But clause *a* balances clause *b* so imperfectly that even on this ground it may well be doubted whether its text is sound.

[a]Yea, moreover, wine is a treacherous dealer, a haughty 5
man, and [b]that keepeth not at home; who enlargeth his

[a] Or, *And also because his wine . . . he is a haughty man*
[b] Or, *he shall not abide*

(EVV. 'truth'). The righteous man—i. e. here the righteous Israelite—who is *faithful* in all the relations of life, and is sincere and upright in heart and purpose, has in his character a principle of permanence which cannot be shaken, and which, whatever external troubles may assail him, should be to him a source of moral strength and security. See further on this verse, and also on the quotations of it in the N. T., above, pp. 62-64[1].

5-20. A series of woes, each denouncing some characteristic sin of the Chaldaean, and threatening him, expressly or by implication, with condign retribution for it. As the text stands, there follow, after the introductory words (*vv.* 5, 6^{a}), *five* paragraphs, each introduced by *Ah!* (cf. Is. v. 8-24), and each purporting to be spoken (*v.* 6) by the nations whom the Chaldaean has victimized. As the prophet proceeds, however, he seems to forget *v.* 6, and to speak in his own person; and if (see the next note) *v.* 5 began originally with *Ah!* the words spoken by the nations may be confined to *vv.* 6^{b}-8.

5. The first 'woe,' directed against the ambition of the Chaldaeans and their insatiable lust of conquest.

Yea, moreover, wine, &c. No intelligible sense can be extracted from these and the following words: 'wine' is out of place here, the context relating entirely to the ambitious doings of the Chaldaeans; and the rendering 'keepeth at home' is more than doubtful. No entirely satisfactory emendation has been suggested: the best is to read הוי *ah!* for היין 'wine,' though this leaves ואף כי 'yea, moreover,' as an unexplained residuum, which nevertheless must be disregarded: we shall then get, *Ah! the treacherous* (or *ruthless*) *dealer* (i. e. the Chaldaean, as i. 13), *the haughty* (Prov. xxi. 24) *man, that resteth not* (ינוח for ינוה)—the words thus referring to the restless ambition of the Chaldaeans.

who enlargeth his desire as Sheol, &c., i. e. as Hades, or

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[1] The LXX, partly misunderstanding, or confusing, the Heb., and partly reading differently, render *vv.* 3^{b}, 4: 'If he tarry, wait for him, for coming he will come and will not delay. If he (one) shrink back, my soul [נפשי for נפשו] hath no pleasure [רצתה for ישרה—or, more probably, a loose rendering of ישרה] in him; but the righteous shall live through [*lit.* from] my faithfulness [מאמונתי for באמונתו].' The quotations of *v.* 4^{b} in Rom. i. 17, Gal. iii. 11, and of *vv.* 3^{b}, 4, in Heb. x. 37 f., are based upon this version of the LXX (cf. p. 63).

desire as [a] hell, and he is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him
6 all peoples. Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting [b] proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long?

[a] Heb. *Sheol.* [b] Or, *riddle*

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the Underworld: he is as insatiate as the grave, or as Death (which is here personified). Cf. Is. v. 14 'Therefore *Sheol hath enlarged her desire*, and opened her mouth without measure'; Prov. xxvii. 20 'Sheol and Abaddon are *never satisfied*,' xxx. 15 f. 'Desire' is lit. *soul*—the 'soul' in the psychology of the Hebrews being regarded as the seat of desire and appetite: cf. Ex. xv. 9 'My *soul* shall be filled with them'; Is. lvi. 11 'greedy,' *lit.* 'strong of *soul*' (see more fully the writer's *Parallel Psalter*, p. 459 f.).

but gathereth, &c. Sweeps all nations into his net.

6ª. a parable. Rather, **a taunt-song.** To define the exact meaning of *māshāl* in some of its usages is very difficult: see Dr. Gray's *Comment. on Numbers*, pp. xiii—xiv, 299 f., 344 f. It means properly a *likeness* or *representation*; it thus (besides its usual sense of *proverb*) denotes sometimes (Ez. xvii. 2, xxiv. 3) a *parable* or *allegory*, i. e. a representation symbolizing, in indirect or figurative language, something else, and sometimes (as Nu. xxiii. 7, 18; Job xxvii. 1, xxix. 1) an elevated and declaratory poetical discourse. Here, Is. xiv. 4, and Mic. ii. 4, it is used of a lamentation over the fall of a nation or its ruler. 'Parable' in these passages suggests a wholly incorrect idea; and the best rendering is probably *taunt-song* (cf. Is. xiv. 4 AVm. 'taunting speech').

and a figure (Prov. i. 6), even **riddles, in regard to him.** Synonyms for a 'taunt-song,' derived from the fact that its meaning was often concealed under allusive, enigmatic figures or expressions.

6ᵇ–8. The taunt-song. The nations tax the Chaldaeans with the spoliation and bloodshed with which their conquests had been effected, and for which, they declare, a just retribution will be inflicted on them.

Ah! (Nah. iii. 1) **he that increaseth that which is not his** (by plundering other nations). There is probably, as in *v.* 7, an allusion to the custom of taking interest, which was viewed with disfavour by the Jews, and stigmatized by them as unjust: the verb rendered 'increaseth' being cognate to one of the Hebrew words for 'interest' (Prov. xxviii. 8; Lev. xxv. 36: EVV. 'increase').

and that ladeth himself with pledges! Shall they not rise 7
up suddenly that shall [a] bite thee, and awake that shall
[b] vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them?
Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant 8
of the peoples shall spoil thee; because of men's blood,
and for the violence done to the land, to the city and to
all that dwell therein.

[a] Or, *exact usury of thee* [b] Or, *toss thee to and fro*

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ladeth himself with pledges. The Chaldaean is compared to a merciless usurer (Dt. xxiv. 10), who compels the nations to give him heavy pledges: but the day will come when these pledges will have to be repaid.

7. The retribution. There is a play here on the double sense of the word *nāshak*, which means both *to bite* (Gen. xlix. 17), and also (metaphorically) *to bite off* from the principal lent, i. e. to give interest: the ptcp. *nōshek* means accordingly a *giver of interest* or a *debtor*, and the subst. *neshek*, *lit.* a *biting off*, means *interest* (EVV. *usury*). The Chaldaean is represented as a creditor who exacts heavy interest: the victimized nations are thus *nōshᵉkim*, 'debtors'[1], but also 'biters,' who, when their day comes, will punish him remorselessly for his exactions.

that shall vex thee. 'Vex' was in Old English a stronger word than it is now, and corresponded more closely to the Lat. *vexare*, to *drag to and fro*; it is now inadequate as a rendering of the Heb. word here used. Render **that shall shake thee** (cf. RVm.), viz. to make thee disgorge thy plunder, or disturb thee from thy ill-gained possessions.

booties. The plural is intensive, and hints at the amount and variety of the spoils to be wrung from the oppressor.

8. The *lex talionis* will be put in force against the Chaldaeans: cf. Is. xiv. 2ᵇ, xxxiii. 1.

the remnant of the peoples: i. e. those who have escaped destruction, whether among (Jos. xxiii. 12), or outside of, the 'many' nations despoiled by the Chaldaeans.

because of men's blood, &c. Because of the violence done to humanity. 'City' is to be understood collectively, of the cities which the Chaldaeans had ravaged or burnt. Cf. the description of Babylon as the 'hammer of the whole earth,' Jer. l. 23, also li. 7, 25, Is. xiv. 6.

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[1] Not, as RVm., *they that exact usury of thee*, which would be expressed by the *Hiphil* conj. (Dt. xxiii. 20), not by the *Ḳal*.

9 Woe to him that getteth an evil gain for his house,
that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered
10 from the hand of evil! Thou hast consulted shame to
thy house, by cutting off many peoples, and hast sinned

9–11. The second 'woe.' The rapacity and violence by which their empire had been established.

Ah! he that getteth an evil gain for his house: i.e. for his dynasty; the 'evil gain' thus obtained by the Chaldaean being, as the following words signify, employed by him in fortifying and securing his abode.

set his nest on high, &c.: i.e. secure himself against calamity, the figure being derived from the custom of certain birds, especially (Tristram, *NHB.* 175) the 'eagle' or Griffon-vulture (see on i. 8), of building their nests amid inaccessible rocks, along the steep sides of gorges and defiles, which can be reached only by the most intrepid climbers. Cf., for the figure, Nu. xxiv. 21; Ob. 4 = Jer. xlix. 16.

hand. Fig. for power, as often in Heb.: e.g. Ps. xxii. 20, xlix. 15.

of evil: i.e. calamity from assailants.

10. Thou hast purposed shame to thy house. An oxymoron: the Chaldaean of course planned in reality the safety of his own house, but his plan resulted in its confusion and disgrace. Cf. Hos. iv. 18 'her rulers love ignominy,' i.e. love the course of action which leads to it; and the similar cases in which the result of a course of action is described ironically as its purpose, Hos. viii. 4; Is. xxx. 1; Jer. vii. 18, 19 (*Lex.* p. 775^b). 'Consult' in RV. is used here as in Mic. vi. 5, in the sense, now obsolete, of *purposing* or *devising*: see Murray, *Engl. Dict.*, who cites from Ussher (1658), 'Vologeses was supposed to have *consulted* the invading of Armenia.'

(even) **the cutting off of many peoples.** This clause explains what the Chaldaean had in reality purposed, and what it was which had led to the 'shame' or confusion of his 'house,' viz. the cutting off (2 K. x. 32) of many peoples. The versions, with different vowels, read *thou hast cut off*, perhaps rightly (EVV. '*by* cutting off' is an impossible rendering).

and hast sinned, &c. Render: **forfeiting thine own life.** *Ḥāṭā* is used here in its primary sense of *missing* (Jud. xx. 16, in the caus. conj., '*let* (the stone) *miss*'), Job v. 24 RV., Prov. viii. 36 RVm., xix. 2 RVm., and especially xx. 2 'he that angereth himself against a king is *on the way to forfeit his own life*.' In using violence towards the nations the Chaldaean was so acting as ultimately to bring ruin upon himself.

against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, 11
and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.

Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and 12
stablisheth a city by iniquity! Behold, is it not of the 13
LORD of hosts that the peoples labour for the fire, and
the nations weary themselves for vanity? For the earth 14
shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the
LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that 15

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11. The very stones and wood of which his houses and palaces are built will bear witness to the robbery and injustice by which they were procured.

12–14. The third 'woe.' The cruelty and oppression which had given them the means of building and beautifying their cities. The allusion may be either to the plunder and bloodshed by which the Chaldaean enriched his coffers, or to the forced labour of conquered subjects, by which, with disregard to the lives lost in the process, public works and buildings are constructed in Eastern despotisms.

12. Ah! he that buildeth, &c. Cf. Mic. iii. 10 'Building up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity' (viz. by forced labour, wealth gained by oppression and judicial murders, &c.: cf. Jer. xxii. 13, 17, of Jehoiakim).

13. But the nations, such is Yahweh's decree, toil only to satisfy the fire—for fire will destroy the cities they have built; and they weary themselves only for vanity (*lit.* 'emptiness'), for their empires will fall into ruins. Cf. the citation in Jer. li. 58^b.

of: i.e. **from** (as often in Old English; cf. Ps. xxii. 25 PBV.): the Heb. exactly as 1 K. xii. 24 (EVV. 'the thing is *of* (= *from*) me'); Ps. xxii. 25, cxviii. 23, &c.

14. Reason for *vv.* 12, 13. The civilizations of heathendom will perish; **for** something better will take their place: **the earth will be filled with the knowledge of Yahweh's glory** (as manifested, viz. in their overthrow: see, for this sense of 'glory,' Is. lxvi. 18, 19; and cf. Ez. xxviii. 22, xxxix. 13, 21), and its inhabitants will no longer care to toil for the fire. The verse is based upon Is. xi. 9^b (which closes the description of the blissful reign of the ideal king), but differs from it both in wording (especially in the addition of 'the glory of') and in application.

15–17. The fourth 'woe.' The Chaldaeans' savage triumph over the nations which fell into their power.

15. Ah! he that giveth his neighbour drink, &c. Drunken-

[a]addest thy [b]venom *thereto*, and makest him drunken
16 also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! Thou
art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and
[c]be as one uncircumcised: the cup of the LORD's right

[a] Or, *pourest* [b] Or, *fury* [c] Or, *let thy foreskin be uncovered*

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ness is here a figure of the prostration and helplessness of a conquered people, powerless under the stupefying or paralysing effects of a great catastrophe: cf. Nah. iii. 11 and the passages there quoted.

addest: RVm. **pourest.** Both renderings are uncertain. The verb used occurs in the sense of 'attach' or 'join,' 1 S. ii. 36, xxvi. 19, Is. xiv. 1, and (probably) Job xxx. 7, though this is not quite the same as that of *adding* something to a liquid; and the sense 'pour' is supported by the Arabic, and by the derivative 'overflowings' in Job xiv. 19. But see the next note.

venom: RVm. **fury.** The word (*ḥēmāh*) signifies properly *heat*; hence it means fig. (*a*) *fury*, Nah. i. 6, and often, (*b*) *poison* or *venom*, Dt. xxxii. 24, 33. If the text is sound, the meaning will thus be that the wine is, as it were, heated, or strengthened, by the fury (or venom) of the nations being mingled with it so as to make it more efficacious in producing drunkenness. But the text (see the last note) is suspicious; and the clever emendation of Grätz and Wellh., which involves extremely slight change in the text, may safely be accepted: 'Ah! he that giveth his neighbour drink *from the bowl* (Zech. xii. 2) of his fury, and maketh him drunken also!'

in order to look, &c. That he may gloat over the spectacle of his exposure (Gen. ix. 21), fig. for the humiliation and disgrace accompanying his 'drunkenness.' Cf. Lam. iv. 21ᵇ; Nah. iii. 5ᵇ.

16. But in doing this the Chaldaean has only prepared humiliation and disgrace for himself.

Thou art sated with ignominy rather than (= **and not with**) **glory.** The 'prophetic' past, describing the future as already accomplished: the Chaldaean will be sated (an oxymoron) not with glory but with ignominy. The same two words are opposed in Hos. iv. 7 'Their glory I will exchange for ignominy.'

drink thou also. How this effect will be produced: it will now be the Chaldaean's turn to drink; for the stupefying draught which he has given the nations of the earth to drink (cf. Jer. li. 7) will soon be given by Yahweh to himself (cf. Jer. xxv. 26 *end*).

and be uncircumcised (without 'as one'). More exactly, if the text is correct, *get thee a foreskin*, i. e. become an object of hand shall be turned unto thee, and foul shame shall be upon thy glory. For the violence done to Lebanon 17 shall cover thee, and the destruction of the beasts, [a] which made them afraid; because of men's blood,

[a] According to many ancient versions, *shall make thee afraid.*

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mockery. But the figure is both very harsh and also foreign to the context; so that Wellh. is almost certainly right in transposing two letters and reading with LXX (*σαλεύθητι* : see Zech. xii. 2) **and stagger**[1], which forms a good sequel to 'drink'; see Is. li. 17, 22 ('the cup of *staggering*'); and cf. Jer. xxv. 15, 16.

the cup of Yahweh's right hand. The cup of His wrath (Jer. xxv. 15, 17, 28), which intoxicates, and renders helpless, those who drink it: fig. of a great and overwhelming disaster. Cf. Is. li. 17, 22, just cited; Jer. xxv. 16, 27; Ez. xxiii. 31–33; and especially Lam. iv. 21.

be turned. Better, **come round**: cf. for the thought Jer. xxv. 15; Lam. iv. 21. 'Be turned' is, however, no doubt meant here in the now obsolete neuter sense of *turn round*: see in AV. Rev. i. 12^b, compared with i. 12^a (*Parallel Psalter*, p. 483).

17. The reason why this doom will fall upon the Chaldaean: the violence wrought by him in the world will recoil upon his head.

the violence done to Lebanon. 'Lebanon' might be intended to typify the land of Israel generally (cf. Is. xxxiii. 9; Jer. xxii. 20, 23); but more probably it is meant literally: the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings abound with accounts of the amount of timber cut down in the forests of Amanus or Lebanon[2] for building temples and palaces in their capitals, and also of their great hunting exploits in the same regions; and the Chaldaeans acted in these respects like their predecessors (see especially Is. xiv. 8).

and the destruction of the beasts shall dismay thee. So we must read, with the ancient versions and RVm.; the textual change is exceedingly slight (יחתך for יחתן).

because of men's blood, &c. The same words as in *v.* 8, repeated as a kind of refrain. They must not be understood as explanatory of the two preceding clauses, but as *parallel* to them, only the form of expression being changed: the shame described in *v.* 16 will overtake the Chaldaean both because of the violence

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[1] This rendering is in fact already suggested by Kimchi.

[2] From Amanus, *KB.* i. 131 f., 141, 161, III. ii. 83, 101, 109; from Lebanon, II. 23 (Tiglath-pileser), 135 (Esarhaddon), 235 (Asshurbanipal); cf. Is. xxxvii. 24; III. i. 15 and 39 (Nebuchadnezzar).

and for the violence done to the land, to the city and to
all that dwell therein.
18 What profiteth the graven image, that the maker thereof
hath graven it; the molten image, and the teacher of lies,
that the maker of [a] his work trusteth therein, to make
19 dumb idols? Woe unto him that saith to the wood,
Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise! Shall this teach?

[a] Or, *its*

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done to Lebanon and the beasts, and also because of that done to human beings.

18–20. The fifth 'woe.' Their irrational and bootless idolatry. On the analogy of the other 'woes' *v.* 19 should precede *v.* 18; and this order would improve the sequence of thought, *v.* 19, stating the sin generally, being followed (as in the other cases) by a reference to its effects, viz. the inability of the idol to help or deliver its owner. Even, however, with this transposition some more direct application of what is said to the case of the Chaldaeans is desiderated, and possibly a verse to this effect has fallen out.

18 (the sequel, really, of *v.* 19). The uselessness of idols in the hour of need. For the thought that idols, or false gods, do not 'profit,' cf. 1 S. xii. 21; Jer. ii. 8, 11, xvi. 19; Is. xliv. 9, 10, lvii. 12; and the satire upon idol-makers, Is. xli. 6–7, xliv. 9–20, xlvi. 6–7; Jer. x. 2–9; on the idols of the Chaldaeans, also, Is. xxi. 9; Jer. l. 38.

the teacher of lies. I. e. the idol itself, which 'teaches' through its priests, and so sustains the delusion that it is a god. The word 'teach' (or 'direct') is the one used technically of 'direction' given by a priest in the name of his god: see on Hag. ii. 11; and cf. in Gen. xii. 6 the 'directing terebinth,' of an oracular tree.

the maker of his work. More exactly, *he that formed his framed thing* (Is. xxix. 16), i. e. his idol, or *he that formed its* (RVm.) *frame* (Ps. ciii. 14), gave it (the idol) its particular size and contour (AVm. *fashion*). The verb (with which in the Heb. the subst. is cognate) means properly to *mould as a potter*; but it is often used in various fig. applications. Of idols, as here, Is. xliv. 9, 10, 12, and above in the present verse ('maker').

dumb idols. LXX, *εἴδωλα κωφά*; cf. 1 Cor. xii. 2 *εἴδωλα ἄφωνα*. The word rendered 'idols' (אלילים) suggests the idea of what is unsubstantial and worthless (Job xiii. 4 '*worthless* physicians,' Jer. xiv. 14 'a *thing of nought*'); cf. Is. ii. 8, 18, 20.

19. Awake! . . . Arise! viz. to help me: the words addressed

Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it. [A?] But the LORD 20 is in his holy temple: [a] let all the earth keep silence before him.

[A] A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, set to Shigionoth. 3

[a] Heb. *be silent before him, all the earth.*

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elsewhere to Yahweh, Ps. xxxv. 23, xliv. 23. Cf. similar irony in Dt. xxxii. 37f.; Jer. ii. 28; Is. xlvi. 7.

Shall this teach? Or, **direct?** i. e. give answers, when consulted, as to what is to be done. An exclamation of contempt at the infatuation of those who would resort to such an object for guidance.

there is no breath, &c. Cf. Jer. x. 14; Ps. cxxxv. 17; also Dt. iv. 28; Ps. cxv. 6. See developments of the thought of these two verses in Is. xliv. 9–20, and the prophecy inserted in Jeremiah's book which now stands as Jer. x. 1–16.

20. The prophet's thought now passes by contrast (cf. Jer. x. 10) from the dumb and helpless idol to Yahweh, the living God: He is in His heavenly Temple, where He sits enthroned as Governor of the world, watching the deeds of men, and ready, if need be, to interpose and punish them (Ps. xi. 4, 6).

be silent before him. In the Heb. an exclamation, **hush!** or **be still!** so Zeph. i. 7; Zech. ii. 13 (Heb. 17). The expression is perhaps (but not certainly) intended to form the transition to ch. iii.

iii. This chapter consists of a lyric ode, in which the poet, with great brilliancy and poetical power, develops the thought of Yahweh's coming to judgement, and executing vengeance on His people's foes. The 'prayer' (as it is called in the title) is limited to *v.* 2; and is to the effect that Yahweh will 'revive' His work 'in the midst of years,' i. e. renew or repeat, in the midst of the years that have passed since the Exodus, the great 'work' (Ps. xliv. 1) of deliverance wrought by Him of old. As an answer to this prayer the prophet pictures a theophany, in which Yahweh appears to judge and to redeem. The theophany is described in language and imagery suggested by the Exodus and by the terms of Dt. xxxiii. 2, Jud. v. 4, 5. The scene is laid in the desert region on the S. of Judah: a great thunderstorm comes up from the mountains of Edom and Paran; it bursts over the wilderness; neighbouring peoples are in dismay; and the oppressors of Israel are scattered before it. In the description past

2 O LORD, I have heard [a] the report of thee, and [b] am
afraid:
O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years,
In the midst of the years make it known;

[a] Or, *thy fame* [b] Or, *was*

---

tenses predominate (see in the Heb. *vv.* 3^b, 6, 8^a, 10, &c.), the future, in accordance with a frequent usage of the prophets (see e.g. Is. ix. 2 ff., xxxiii. 3), being vividly imagined as past, and described accordingly. In English we should more naturally in such a case use presents (cf. RVm. on *v.* 3). For other descriptions of a coming deliverance, painted in colours suggested by the Exodus, see Is. xi. 15, 16, xliii. 16, 17, xlviii. 21, lii. 12. On the question of the authorship of the ode, see above, pp. 59 f.

1. The title resembles those in the Psalms, e.g. Ps. xc.

set to Shigyōnōth. *Shigyōnōth* would be the plural of *Shiggāyōn,* which appears in the title of Ps. vii, 'Shiggāyōn of David.' The meaning, like that of most of the other musical terms occurring in the titles of the Psalms, is obscure; the verb *shāgāh* means *to go astray* or *wander* (Ez. xxxiv. 6; through wine, Is. xxviii. 7 [thrice]; and morally, *to err,* 1 S. xxvi. 21 *al.*); hence it has been supposed that *Shiggāyōn* may denote a dithyrambic poem, written in wandering irregular rhythms, and 'set to Shigyōnōth,' one sung to music of a similar character: but this explanation has only the value of a conjecture.

2. I have heard. The prophet speaks most probably in the name of the community, as he does clearly in *v.* 14: cf. similarly Is. lxi. 10 f.; Jer. v. 19 f., x. 19 f., 24; Mic. vii. 7–10, &c. (*LOT.*, p. 390).

the report of thee, and am afraid. The prophet had 'heard the report' (Dt. ii. 25), or 'fame' (Nu. xiv. 15; Is. lxvi. 19; 1 K. x. 1), of what Yahweh had done at the Exodus; and, realizing it vividly, was 'afraid' (cf. Ex. xiv. 31): when God appears in judgement, even though His judgement alights only on His foes, all who witness it will naturally be filled with awe and dread.

revive thy work, &c. The prophet looks back to the great 'work' of the Exodus, and forward into the indefinite future; and, fearful lest Yahweh may still defer His redemption, prays that, 'in the midst' of this long period 'of years,' He will interpose quickly on His people's behalf.

make (it) **known.** Wellh., Now., Marti, adopt the reading which underlay the rendering of LXX, *make thyself known* (cf. Ps. ix. 16, xlviii. 3; Ez. xx. 9, xxxviii. 23)[1].

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[1] LXX for most of the last clause and for this have the curious and in part double and even treble rendering, 'In the midst of *two*

In wrath remember mercy.
God [a] came from Teman, 3

[a] Or, *cometh* (and similarly to the end of ver. 15)

In wrath remember mercy. Yahweh's wrath with Israel might lead Him to defer His interference, and allow the time of trial and waiting to be protracted: he prays, therefore, that this may be shortened, and that in His anger with Israel He will remember mercy. Others understand the 'wrath' of that which the Judge will manifest when He appears in judgement, and which the prophet prays may not alight upon Israel; but the form in which the clause is expressed suggests that it does not introduce a contrast to, or qualification of, the two preceding clauses, but is rather *parallel* to them.

3–7. The theophany. The poet describes a great storm, advancing from the south, the region of Paran and Sinai: in the dark thunder-clouds he conceives Yahweh to be concealed; the lightning-flashes which illumine heaven and earth disclose glimpses of the dazzling brightness immediately about Him; the earth quakes, the hills sink, and neighbouring desert-tribes look on in dismay. The Hebrews habitually pictured Yahweh as borne along in the thunder-cloud (see Ps. xviii. 7, and cf. on Nah. i. 3^b, 5): the usual word for 'thunder' in Heb. is *voices* (viz. of Yahweh), e. g. Ex. ix. 23 (Heb.), 28 (cf. RVm.); 1 S. xii. 17; and cf. Ps. xxix. 3–9. For illustrations, from an actual storm in the same region, of many traits in the poet's imagery, see pp. 99 f.

from Teman. A district in the N. or NW. of Edom (Ez. xxv. 13; Am. i. 12 *al.*). Cf. Dt. xxxiii. 2, Jud. v. 4, where Yahweh is represented similarly as coming to the help of His people from *Edom*.

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animals [a misreading or confusion of the Heb. words rendered rightly, 'In the midst of years revive it'] thou shalt be known, when the years draw nigh thou shalt be recognized, when the time approaches thou shalt be declared.' These words were supposed by the Fathers to be a prediction of the birth of Christ; and the first clause has had considerable influence upon Christian art; for it is the origin of the pictorial representations of the Infant Saviour, lying in the stable at Bethlehem between an ox and an ass (these two animals being suggested by Is. i. 3, which was interpreted mystically of Christ). See on this subject an article by A. West, in the *Contemp. Review,* Dec. 1903, pp. 873 ff., according to whom (p. 879) this interpretation of the LXX rendering of Hab. iii. 2^b is first found at the end of the fifth century in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew (translated into Latin by Jerome): see also ibid. p. 881 on other patristic exegesis of the same rendering.

And the Holy One from mount Paran. [Selah
His glory covered the heavens,
And the earth was full of his praise.
4 And *his* brightness was as the light;
He had [a] rays *coming forth* [b] from his hand:
And there was the hiding of his power.
5 Before him went the pestilence,

[a] Heb. *horns*. [b] Or, *at his side*

the Holy One. Who cannot endure wickedness (i. 13), and who will judge the world, and destroy the wicked oppressor out of it (iii. 12–14). Cf. the same title (also used absolutely) in Is. xl. 25: usually it is the 'Holy One of Israel' (cf. on i. 12).

from Paran. The elevated region between the Sinaitic peninsula and Kadesh-barnea (Gen. xxi. 21; Nu. xii. 16, xiii. 26): cf. especially Dt. xxxiii. 2.

His glory. Rather, **His majesty,** as of a King, Ps. xxi. 5^{b}, civ. 1^{c} (in each render 'majesty and state'): here with reference to the splendour of the lightnings, which seemed to cover the whole heavens (cf. p. 100). Not the word used in Ps. xix. 1.

his praise. Not the praise addressed to Him by men, but that in God which evokes men's praise, His **splendour** or **glory.** Cf. similar uses of 'praise' in Is. lx. 18, lxii. 7; Jer. xlviii. 2, li. 41.

4. And his brightness was as the light, the full light of the sun (Job xxxi. 26 RVm.). The rendering implies two slight changes in the text (נגהו for נגה; and יהיה for תהיה); but this, or something similar, must, it seems, be adopted.

He had rays (lit. *horns*: see Ex. xxxiv. 29 RVm.) coming forth **at his side** (i. e. at either side), alluding to the flashes of lightning accompanying the storm. Cf. Dt. xxxiii. 2 'at his right hand was a burning fire[1] for them'; and Ps. xviii. 12, l. 3.

And there: viz. where the lightnings played; the lightnings forming, as it were, a veil concealing Yahweh's full 'power,' or Godhead.

5. Yahweh is figured as a king, making a victorious progress through his enemies' country: Pestilence and Fever are personified as His attendants, the one preceding Him as His armour-bearer (1 S. xvii. 7), or courier (2 S. xv. 1), the other following behind

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[1] An emended text: 'fiery law' cannot be right—the word for 'law' being a *Persian* one, only found in very late Hebrew (Ezr. viii. 36; Est. i. 8, &c.).

And [a] fiery bolts went forth at his feet.
He stood, and [b] measured the earth; 6
He beheld, and drove asunder the nations:
And the eternal mountains were scattered,
The everlasting hills did bow;

[a] Or, *burning coals* [b] Or, *shook*

(1 S. xxv. 42) as His servant, and executing His behests (cf. 1 S. xiv. 13).

the pestilence. Lev. xxvi. 25; Ps. xci. 3, 6 *al.*

And fiery darts went forth at his feet (i. e. as He went along). *Resheph* is a pointed, darting flame (Cant. viii. 6; Ps. lxxvi. 3 RVm.; lxxviii. 48 poet. for lightnings), here, as in Dt. xxxii. 24, used poetically of the fiery darts, sent by Yahweh, to which either the poet, or popular imagination, attributed fever, or other pestilential complaint. *Reshef* or *Reshûf* seems to have been the name of the Fire- or Lightning-god in Phoenician [1].

6. The storm now descends from heaven, and approaches the earth, and its effects, as it bursts close upon it, are described: the ground rocks, mountains are cleft, and human beings start back in terror. The description may be merely that of the storm (cf. p. 100); or the theophany may be pictured as accompanied by an earthquake.

measured. The meaning has been supposed to be, measured with the eyes, i. e. surveyed; but this is very improbable. We may read, either with RVm. **shook** (for this implies a slight change in the text [2]), or with Wellh. **made the earth to melt** [3] (cf. Nah. i. 5, and especially Am. ix. 5). For similar effects represented as produced by Yahweh's touching or marching over the earth, cf. Am. ix. 5; Mic. i. 3, 4; Nah. i. 5.

He looked, and made the nations start (or, **leap**); the Judge's look made them quail with terror. Not *drove asunder*: see Lev. xi. 21 ('to *leap*'), Job xxxvii. 1 b (read 'starteth' for the colourless 'is moved').

were scattered. Were shattered, cleft asunder before Him (cf. Mic. i. 4). See Jer. xxiii. 29 ('breaketh in pieces').

did bow. Better, **did sink** (cf. Job ix. 13 'did stoop')—viz. in the earthquake accompanying the tempest. The words *eternal* and *everlasting* would probably be better rendered *ancient* and

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[1] Cf. the writer's *Comm. on Deut.* pp. 367 f.; Maspero, *Struggle of the Nations*, p. 156; Cooke, *North-Sem. Inscriptions*, pp. 56 f., 89.

[2] וימטט (cf. Is. xxiv. 19) for וימדד. There is no word מור or מדד meaning 'to shake.'

[3] וימגג for וימדד.

[a] His goings were *as* of old.
7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction:
The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.
8 Was the LORD displeased against the rivers?
Was thine anger against the rivers,
Or thy wrath against the sea,
That thou didst ride upon thine horses,
Upon thy chariots of salvation?

[a] Or, *His ways are everlasting*

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primaeval, the point being that mountains which had been fixed immovably for long centuries now gave way: see the same two expressions in parallelism in Gen. xlix. 26 RVm.; cf. Dt. xxxiii. 15 (in the Heb. a different word for *ancient*).

His goings were as of old (the word rendered *everlasting* in the preceding clause). His progress (Ps. lxviii. 24), as the poet pictured it, was as it had been of old, when He came forth at the Exodus for the deliverance of His people. The marg. (=AV.) is not probable.

7. As of yore, at the Exodus (Ex. xv. 14–16), neighbouring tribes quaked with terror.

Cushan. Only mentioned here. Presumably some neighbouring tribe to Midian.

curtains. I. e. *tent-hangings*; in parallelism with 'tents,' as Is. liv. 2; Jer. iv. 20, x. 20, xlix. 29.

the land of Midian. Properly the country on the E. side of the Gulf of Akabah; but Midianites were also settled in the Sinaitic Peninsula (Ex. iii. 1, xviii. 1), and apparently (1 K. xi. 18) between Edom and Paran. Named as one of the peoples who would be among the first to be alarmed, as Yahweh came forth from 'Teman' and 'Paran' (*v.* 3).

8–15. The motive of the theophany. 'Was Yahweh angry,' the poet asks, 'with seas or rivers, that He thus came forth riding through the heavens?' and again he depicts, in splendid imagery, the course of the storm (*vv.* 9–11). *Vv.* 13–15 give the answer to the poet's question: it was to save His people, and annihilate those who sought to destroy it.

8. against the rivers (first time). Read probably, with Grätz, merely dropping one letter, **against the mountains:** this both relieves the tautology, and is suited to the context (*v.* 6).

of salvation. Better, **of deliverance** or **victory:** the Heb. word—which, as Arabic shows, means properly *breadth*, *spaciousness*, *freedom*—having the same sense of a *material* deliverance

Thy bow was made quite bare; 9
[a] The oaths to the tribes were a *sure* word. [Selah
Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.
The mountains saw thee, and [b] were afraid; 10
The tempest of waters passed by:

[a] Or, *Sworn were the chastisements* (Heb. *rods*) *of* thy *word*
[b] Or, *were in pain*

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which it has in Ex. xiv. 13, 1 Sam xiv. 45, Ps. iii. 8, and elsewhere (cf. the writer's *Parallel Psalter*, pp. 455 f.).

The 'horses' and 'chariots' are here the storm-clouds, upon which Yahweh is elsewhere also pictured as 'riding,' Is. xix. 1; Ps. xviii. 10, civ. 3: cf. Dt. xxxiii. 26; Ps. lxviii. 33.

9. Thy bow was made quite bare: i. e. taken out of its covering for use. The arrows (*v.* 11) which the poet pictures it as discharging will be here the lightnings or thunder-bolts which strike the earth in the storm.

The oaths to the tribes, &c. The text of this clause must be corrupt: not only are the renderings of both RV. and RVm. very questionable, but any mention of the *tribes* is altogether out of place: it is only the *storm* which is here described, and a reference to the deliverance of the people follows only in *vv.* 12–14. What is really wanted here is some description of the discharge of arrows from the bow. No certain emendation can be proposed. Marti, supposing 'thy quiver' to have been lost at the beginning of the verse, conjectures (partly on the basis of a group of LXX MSS.), *Thou didst wholly empty thy quiver, thy bow was satiate* (for the figure, cf. Jer. xlvi. 10) *with shafts* [the word rendered in the marg. 'rods'].

Thou didst cleave the earth into rivers. The rush of waters, pouring down the mountain-sides, dug out channels in the earth, and filled the dry wádys with torrents. See p. 100.

10. The continued description of the storm: torrents of rain pour down; the waves of the deep roar aloud, and mount high, as though in amazement. Of *vv.* 10, 11 there are evident reminiscences in Ps. lxxvi. 16–17 (of the storm accompanying the passage of the Red Sea).

were afraid. Better, **were in pangs**—the word is commonly used of the pangs of childbirth: in the thunder and earthquake the mountains seemed to quiver and be in throes. Cf. Ps. lxxvii. 16[a] 'The waters *saw thee*, O God, the waters saw thee, *they were in pangs*.'

The tempest of waters passed by. Rather, **passed on,** advanced. In the Hebrew, however, the words differ only by two

The deep uttered his voice,
And lifted up his hands on high.
11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation;
At the light of thine arrows as they went,
At the shining of thy glittering spear.
12 Thou didst march through the land in indignation,
Thou didst thresh the nations in anger.

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letters from Ps. lxxvii. 7^{a} *the clouds flooded forth waters*; and Now., Wellh., Marti would read accordingly here.

uttered its voice: i. e. roared (Ps. xciii. 3). Cf. Ps. lxxvii. 17^{b} 'the skies *uttered their voice*.' The 'deep' may be the neighbouring sea (*v.* 15); or (p. 100) the roaring torrent produced by the storm in a mountain wády (cf. Ps. xlii. 7).

(And) **lifted up its hands on high.** Poet. for, its waves mounted high, the 'deep' being personified. But Wellh., Now., Marti are probably right in regarding the clause as corrupt, and as forming properly the beginning of *v.* 11, the first two lines of which would then read somewhat as follows (the exact words of which line 1 is a corruption are uncertain):—

The sun [withdrew its light],
The moon stood still in its habitation (זְבֻלָה).

Observe that in *v.* 11 there is no 'and' in the Heb. before 'the moon,' and the verb 'stood' is singular. Cf. LXX (Codd. 23, 62, 86, 147), *φῶς τὸ λαμπρὸν τοῦ ἡλίου ἐπέσχεν· τὸ δὲ φέγγος τῆς σελήνης ἐστάθη.*

11. Sun and moon are in retirement, hidden by the dark thunder-clouds, and eclipsed by the brilliant play of the lightnings.

stood still in (their) **habitation.** Did not come forth, remained hidden in the abode in which, as the Hebrews imagined, they regularly passed the night. Cf. the 'tent' of Ps. xix. 4.

At the light of thine arrows as they went abroad, &c. Fig. for the lightnings (Ps. xviii. 14, lxxvii. 17), which lit up the heavens, and made the sun and moon, so to say, afraid to show themselves. Cf. Ps. lxxvii. 17^{c} 'yea, *thine arrows went abroad*.'

12–15. Hitherto the poet has described the effects of Yahweh's appearance upon nature: he now proceeds to describe how it would result further in the deliverance of Israel, and in a judgement upon Israel's foes.

12. In indignation thou didst march along the earth, In anger thou didst thresh (or, **trample down**) **the nations.** The motive by which Yahweh was actuated is placed first for emphasis. *March*, as Jud. v. 4; Ps. lxviii. 7. *Thresh*: the word means properly *to tread* or *trample* (Dt. xxv. 4 'when he *treadeth out* the

Thou [a] wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, 13
[b] For the salvation of thine anointed;
[c] Thou [d] woundedst the head out of the house of the
wicked,
Laying bare the foundation even unto the neck.
[Selah

[a] Or, *art come*
[b] Or, *For salvation* (or *victory*) *with thine anointed*
[c] Or, *Thou didst smite off the head from the house &c.*
[d] Or, *hast wounded*

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corn'); for threshing was (and is still) often performed in the East by animals, usually oxen (Dt. *loc. cit.*), which were driven round the threshing-floor till their hoofs trampled out the grain[1]. For the same fig. use of the word, see Mic. iv. 13, Is. xli. 15; cf. 2 K. xiii. 7.

13–14. The object of the theophany is here at last stated explicitly. Margins *a*, *d*, on this verse, and *a* on *vv.* 14, 15, are intended to throw the description into the present, in conformity with the first margin on *v.* 3.

13. salvation: i. e. **deliverance,** as *v.* 8.

thine anointed[2]. Either the king—i. e. the Davidic king in the abstract, not necessarily Jehoiakim—or, as others (Hitz., Ew., We., Dav.) prefer (agreeably with the parallelism with line 1), the *people*, who, at least in later times, are sometimes regarded as inheriting the position and dignity of David. The word has been supposed to have the same sense in Ps. xxviii. 8, lxxxiv. 9, lxxxix. 38, 51: cf. cv. 15 (where it is applied, in the *plural*, to the patriarchs).

Thou didst shatter the head off the house, &c. *Māḥaẓ* is *to crush* or *wound severely* by a heavy blow,—on the head, as here, Jud. v. 26, Ps. lxviii. 21 ('smite through'), cx. 6 ('strike through'): seeing that 'from' follows, RVm. 'smite off' is hardly too strong. 'The foe is compared to a house, the top of which is smitten away from it, so that it falls to pieces, and the foundation is laid bare' (Dav.).

Laying bare the foundation: viz. by destroying the house so completely that the foundations appear (Mic. i. 6); cf. Ps. cxxxvii. 7 'Lay it bare, lay it bare, even to the foundation in it.' *Even unto the neck* seems to mean, up to the top of the walls, after their 'head,' or roof, had been knocked away. Several moderns,

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[1] Special implements were, however, also used, as the threshing-board, and threshing-wagon: see the writer's *Joel and Amos*, pp. 227 f., or Whitehouse, *Primer of Heb. Antiquities*, pp. 87, 92.

[2] The very strange לישׁע את must doubtless be corrected.

14 Thou [a] didst pierce with his own staves the head of
his [b] warriors:
They came as a whirlwind to scatter me:
Their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly.

[a] Or, *hast pierced* [b] Or, *hordes* Or, *villages*

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however, omitting a letter, read 'even unto *the rock*,'—i. e. the rock upon which the foundation rested.

14. And so the foes who sought to ruin Israel are destroyed themselves.

with his own staves. If the text is correct, the meaning will be that the enemy were thrown into a panic, and turned their weapons against themselves (cf. Zech. xiv. 13). But, as Dav. remarks, there is nothing in the context to suggest such an idea; and probably we should, with Ew. and others, as well as Codd. 23, 62, 86, 147 of LXX, read **thy staves.** The word rendered *staves* often denotes a *rod* or *staff*, whether used as a support in walking (Ex. iv. 2, &c.), or for beating with (Is. ix. 4, xiv. 5); but only here, and (possibly) in *v.* 9, a warlike implement.

the head. The word is used collectively = **heads.**

of his warriors. The word thus rendered is of unknown meaning; the rendering *warriors* (so Vulg.; cf. LXX, Pesh., *rulers, leaders*) being merely a conjecture suggested by the context. Words apparently allied mean *open country* (Zech. ii. 4; see the note), and *dwellers in the open country*, or *peasantry* (Dt. iii. 5 *lit.* 'cities of the peasantry'): hence RVm. *hordes*, as though the word denoted *dwellers on steppes*, such as the Scythians, who actually overran Western Asia about 630 B. C. (Hdt. i. 104-6), and who came, not as a regular, organized army, but as wild, undisciplined hordes. But the correctness of the text is open to suspicion, though no obvious emendation suggests itself.

came as a whirlwind. For the comparison cf. (though the Heb. word is different) Is. v. 28 (of the Assyrians), Jer. iv. 13 (of the Scythians).

to scatter me. Like chaff: Is. xli. 16; Jer. xiii. 24, xviii. 17. The first person refers to the people, in whose name the words are spoken: cf. on *v.* 2.

Their rejoicing, &c. The foe are compared to robbers, who exult as soon as they have the defenceless wayfarer in their grasp, and feel that they can plunder or murder him at their pleasure in some unfrequented corner (cf. the description in Ps. x. 8, 9).

to devour. Like a wild beast (Ps. xvii. 12): cf. Prov. xxx. 14; or, in so far as the nation is referred to, Jer. x. 25, xxx. 16, l. 7; Ps. xiv. 4 (the Heb. in all is lit. *eat*, as here).

the poor: i. e., here, the suffering and afflicted people of

Thou [a] didst tread the sea with thine horses, 15
The [b] heap of mighty waters.

I heard, and my belly trembled, 16

[a] Or, *hast trodden* [b] Or, *surge*

God. *'Anī* is properly *humbled* or *afflicted*; thus it comes to denote the 'poor' (Ex. xxii. 25 *al.*), describing him, not as a person in want, but as a person *humbled* or *afflicted*, especially by oppression, deprivation of rights, or other misfortune; then lastly the word acquired a moral and religious connotation, and came to denote the *godly* poor, the men who, while in various ways humbled and afflicted, were at the same time the godly servants of Yahweh: so, for instance, Is. xiv. 32, xxvi. 6, and often in the Psalms, as Ps. x. 2, 9, xii. 5. See further the writer's article 'Poor' in *DB.*; and cf. on Zeph. iii. 12.

secretly: more exactly, **in a secret place.** So Ps. x. 8 (RV. *in the covert places*), 9 (RV. *in the covert*), xvii. 12 (RV. *in secret places*), lxiv. 4 (RV. *id.*), Lam. iii. 10 (RV. *id.*).

15. Generally taken as a figurative description of the final ruin of the foe, the imagery being suggested by the passage of the Red Sea, when Yahweh, passing with Israel through the sea, overthrew the hosts of Pharaoh in the waters. The verse, however, says nothing about the *destruction* of any foe; the change of figure from *v.* 14[a] is violent; and there is probability in the suggestion that the verse has become displaced, and that it originally followed *v.* 7: standing there, it would describe how the storm of *vv.* 3-6 proceeded to agitate the waters of the sea, and it would give point to the question in *v.* 8, 'Was Yahweh's wrath against the *sea*?'

The surge (RVm.) **of mighty waters.** The reading of Codd. 23, 62, 86, 147 of LXX (ἐταράχθη), adopted by Wellh., Now., **the mighty waters surged** or (PBV. of Ps. xlvi. 3) **swelled** (חמרו for חמר) has much to recommend it; the words will then describe the effect of Yahweh's 'treading' the sea with His 'horses' (fig. for the storm-clouds, as *v.* 8): the waters foamed and swelled[1].

16-19. Conclusion. The poet closes by reverting to the thought of *v.* 2, 'and was afraid,' and describing the impression which the theophany made upon him: on the one hand, it filled him with agitation and alarm; on the other, it evoked within him a joyous

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[1] For *heap* (RV.) see Ex. viii. 14 [Heb. 10]. The word is externally the same as that for *surge*, but it is really different, the initial guttural, as Arabic shows, being not the same.

My lips quivered at the voice;
Rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in
  my place:
That I should rest [a] in the day of trouble,
  [b] When it cometh up against the people [c] which
  invadeth him in troops.

[a] Or, waiting *for*
[b] Or, *When he that shall invade them in troops cometh up against the people*
[c] Or, *to invade them*

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confidence that, whatever happened, Yahweh would prove Himself His people's salvation.

16. I heard. Viz., in spirit, the storm described in *vv.* 3-15.

belly: i. e. the inward parts generally.

quivered. The word used elsewhere of the ears 'tingling' (1 S. iii. 11; 2 K. xxi. 12; Jer. xix. 3); here of the lips striking together in fear.

voice: rather, **sound,** viz. of the roaring storm.

Rottenness entered into my bones: i. e. the bones, the framework of the poet's body, seemed to give way through fear; his strength utterly failed him. For the fig. cf. Prov. xii. 4, xiv. 30; cf. also the hyperbolical poetical descriptions of the effects of pain or suffering on the 'bones' in Ps. vi. 2, xxii. 14, xxxi. 10, xlii. 10; Is. xxxviii. 13; Lam. i. 13, iii. 4.

in my place: or, **where I stood** (lit. *underneath myself*—an idiomatic usage, 2 S. ii. 23, vii. 10; Is. xxv. 10 *al.*).

That I should rest, &c. This and the next line are most obscure and uncertain, the Heb. being in parts ambiguous, and the text open to suspicion. Assuming the text to be substantially correct, the best rendering is that of RV., with margin *a*, and with the one change (in punctuation only) of 'us' for 'him': *that I should rest* (waiting calmly) *for the day of trouble* (the day of judgement described in *vv.* 3-15, which, though it may end in Israel's deliverance, is nevertheless fraught with terror for those who witness it), *when it cometh up against the people* (i. e. if Habakkuk be the author, the Chaldaeans) *who troop* (Gen. xlix. 19 'Gad, a troop shall troop upon him') *upon us*[1] (so substantially Nowack)[2].

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[1] LXX *upon me* (יגודני for יגודנו) in the same sense, the sing. pronoun referring to the people: see *vv.* 14, 19.

[2] Other renderings that have been proposed are—(1) *That I must wait calmly for the day of trouble, for the coming up against the people* (Israel) *of him who will troop upon it* (Del., Keil, Kirkp.:

For though the fig tree shall not blossom, 17
Neither shall fruit be in the vines;
The labour of the olive shall fail,
And the fields shall yield no meat;
The flock shall be cut off from the fold,
And there shall be no herd in the stalls:

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17. The tenses of the Heb. must here describe a series of *facts*, whether present actually, or pictured in imagination or vision as present; hence the 'though' (which is not in the Heb.) must be understood, not as introducing a merely hypothetical case (as e. g. in Am. ix. 2, 3), but as simply bringing out, for English ears, the antithesis to *v.* 18 (cf. Job viii. 7). The connexion with what precedes is, however, difficult. *V.* 16 describes the prophet's alarm at the manifestation of Yahweh for the overthrow of His people's foes: but how can the failure of the fig and other crops give a reason ('For') for this? *V.* 17 is commonly understood as a prophetical picture of the land of Judah desolated by the invaders (*v.* 16); but, as Now. and Dav. have remarked, the terms of the verse suggest more obviously a failure of crops due to natural causes. It must be allowed that Wellhausen may have seen rightly when he says that *vv.* 17–19 are not the genuine close of the poem: even Davidson observes, 'It is possible that the poem ended originally with *v.* 16, and that *vv.* 17–19 are an addition.'

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so RV. margins *a* and *b*); and (2) *That I must wait calmly for the day of trouble, for its coming up against the people* (Israel) *to troop upon it* (Ewald: so RV. margins *a* and *c*). But the context seems decidedly to require that the 'day of trouble' should come up not against Israel, but against Israel's *foe*: (1) implies also a forced construction of the Heb. יגודנו; and the figure 'troop upon' in (2) is a strange and improbable one to apply to a 'day' ('invade' is a paraphrase which conceals the difficulty). It is some objection to all these renderings that *to rest* nowhere else means *to wait calmly*. Marti reads (with Wellh.) אֲשֻׁרַי [or הרגנו: see Ps. xxxvii. 31] ותחתי ירגזו for ותחתי ארגז אֲשֶׁר, and in the last clause עם for לעם: we then get (after 'bones'), *and my steps tremble where I stand*; (but) *I shall rest in the day of trouble, when the people that troopeth upon me cometh up*; i. e. the poet, speaking in Israel's name, trembles at the prospect of Yahweh's appearing (*vv.* 4–15), but is nevertheless confident that he will have peace in the day of trouble, viz. through Yahweh's striking down his nation's assailants. This yields a good sense, and may be right: the case is one in which it is impossible to speak with confidence.

18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.
19 Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength,
And he maketh my feet like hinds' *feet*,

For the fig tree doth not bud (LXX *bear*),
And there is no increase in the vines;
The produce of the olive hath failed,
And the fields yield no food;
The flock is cut off from the fold,
And there is no herd in the stalls.

This is how the verse ought to read. For *increase*, see Lev. xxvi. 4; Ps. lxvii. 6; Zech. viii. 12: for *fail* (*lit.* 'lie,' 1 K. xiii. 18), Hos. ix. 2. *Meat* in RV. does not mean *flesh*: the word has its old, but now obsolete, sense of food in general, noticed on i. 17.

18. But I (emph.). Introducing an antithesis, as often in the Psalms (e. g. Pss. v. 7, xiii. 5, xxxi. 14). The speaker is the nation (or the prophet representing the nation): 'in spite of calamities (*v.* 17) the nation will joy in God; though earthly blessings perish, He remains their portion. The joy is partly a present one in the possession of God, as Ps. lxxiii. 23; and partly one of hope in His future salvation' (Dav.).

the God of my salvation. Or, **deliverance** (*v.* 8). The title is a frequent one; e.g. Is. xvii. 10; Ps. xviii. 46, xxiv. 5, xxv. 5, xxvii. 9.

19. The nation still speaks, expressing its confidence in Yahweh, as the source of its strength, who gives it the means of overcoming all its enemies, and plants it securely in its own land. The verse is full of reminiscences of Ps. xviii. 32, 33.

my might. Cf. Ps. xviii. 32 'the God who girdeth me with *might*.' Not the word generally used when God is called 'my strength' (Ex. xv. 2 *al.*).

And he maketh, &c. Varied (in the Heb. word for *maketh*) from Ps. xviii. 33^{a}. The allusion is to the swiftness and sureness of foot which are characteristic of the hind, and which make it an apt type of the brave and successful warrior (Ps. xviii. 33; see 2 S. i. 23, 1 Ch. xii. 8). At the same time the comparison suggests 'the freshness of life, the power and confidence in action, which are felt to be drawn from God' (Dav.).

And he maketh me to tread, &c. Varied from Ps. xviii. 33^{b} ('maketh me to *stand*'). RV. retains *walk* from AV.; but **tread** is (like the Heb.) a more uncommon and choicer word, besides being the one used in the same phrase (in both AV. and RV.) in Dt. xxxiii. 29, and (of Yahweh) in Am. iv. 13; Mic. i. 3; Job

And will make me to walk upon mine high
places.

For the Chief Musician, on my stringed instruments.

ix. 8. To 'tread upon the high places' of a land is a phrase implying triumphal possession of it (cf. Dt. xxxiii. 29, and, with 'maketh to ride,' Dt. xxxii. 13, Is. lviii. 14)—here, with 'my,' of the mountain-ranges of Judah, on which Yahweh enables His people to step securely by giving them victory over their foes. The words express the final triumph of the people of God over the powers opposed to it.

For the Chief Musician, &c. The subscription to the ode, indicating that it was taken from some collection of Psalms sung in the Temple services. The expression 'Chief Musician' occurs otherwise only in the titles to fifty-four Psalms—Ps. iv, &c. It is in the Heb. the participle of a verb found only in *late* Hebrew (Chr., Ezr.), and signifying *to oversee* or *superintend* a work, 1 Ch. xxiii. 4; 2 Ch. ii. 2, 18, xxxiv. 12, 13; Ezr. iii. 8, 9; in music, *to lead*, viz. with harps, 1 Ch. xv. 21. To judge from 1 Ch. xv. 21, the *mĕnaẓẓēaḥ* was, in modern phraseology, the *leader of the band*, who may very likely have had under his charge other matters connected with the musical services of the Temple (e. g. he may have been the director of the music generally). '*For* the leader of the band' will mean, presumably, either to be arranged by him for music, or to be performed under his direction, perhaps both.

on my stringed instruments. If the pronoun is correct, it can only refer to the worshipping congregation. That, however, is not natural in a subscription forming no part of the original ode. More probably the pronoun (which is only a single letter in the Hebrew) should be deleted: the entire note will then be exactly the same as that found in the titles of Pss. iv, vi, liv, lv, lxi, lxvii, lxxvi.

Additional Note on Hab. iii.

Storms of great violence, such as the one imagined by Habakkuk, visit the Sinaitic Peninsula every year, and produce the floods, or *seils* (i. e. 'torrents'), so much dreaded by the Bedawín. The Rev. F. W. Holland gives a graphic description[1] of one which he witnessed on December 3 1867, when encamped some way up the Wády Feirán (which runs up from the west to Jebel Mūsā), almost opposite to the mouth of Wády 'Aleyát. The following is an abridgement of his description. 'At 4.30 p.m. a few heavy drops of rain began to fall; and at 5 a tremendous thunderstorm began. The rain fell in torrents, and the roar of the thunder echoing from peak to peak, and the howling of the wind, were quite deafening. It soon grew dark, but the flashes of lightning were so incessant that we could see everything around us [cf. Hab. iii. 3, 4, 11]. In less than a quarter of an hour every ravine and gully in the mountains was pouring down a foaming stream; and soon afterwards a tremendous torrent burst down a little wády just below our tent, carrying with it a mass of débris into Wády Feirán [cf. Nah. i. 5; Jud. v. 4^b, 5]. The bed of Wády Feirán was as yet dry; but soon a white line of foam appeared in the watercourse, and quickly grew in size.' Wave after wave came rolling down; the torrent rose higher and higher; a few minutes after 6, when it had ceased raining, a great wave suddenly demolished the wall near which Mr. Holland and his party had taken refuge, and forced them to retreat for their lives further up the mountain-side. The storm was now over, and the moon soon began to shine out brightly. 'It was a grand but awful sight. It seemed almost impossible to believe that scarcely more than an hour's rain could turn a dry desert wády upwards of 300 yards broad into a foaming torrent from 8 to 10 feet deep [cf. Hab. iii. 9^c, 10]. Yet there it was, roaring and tearing down, and carrying with it tangled masses of tamarisks, and hundreds of palm-trees. A few miles above where I stood a whole Arab encampment was swept away from the mouth of Wády Umm Ṭákhah, and thirty persons perished, besides scores of sheep and other animals. The roar of the torrent was tremendous; the boulders ground along beneath the water with the noise as of a hundred mills at work, and every now and then the ground on which I stood shook again as some huge rock charged down against it from Wády 'Aleyát [cf. Nah. i. 5, 6^b]. At 9.30 the flood was rapidly subsiding; and by the next morning a gently flowing stream, but a few yards broad and a few inches deep, was all that remained of it. But the whole bed of Wády Feirán had been changed: huge banks of sand and stones had taken the place of hollows, and large groves of tamarisks and palm-trees had become barren wastes of sand.' This *seil*, Captain (afterwards Sir Charles) Wilson discovered subsequently, had swept away so much of the soil of the Wády Feirán as to lower its bed by 8 feet. From the suddenness with which such storms arise, and produce a *seil*, the Bedawin of the Peninsula will never encamp in the bed of a wády, or in spots where precipitous mountain-sides would prevent a hasty retreat in case of need.

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[1] *The Ordnance Survey of the Peninsula of Sinai* (1869), pp. 226 f., 244.

ZEPHANIAH

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

Explanation of Symbols.

Z	Zephaniah.
A	Later addition.

ZEPHANIAH

INTRODUCTION

§ 1. The person and date of Zephaniah.

Zephaniah[1] is earlier in date than Habakkuk, and in all probability earlier also than Nahum. For he mentions various forms of idolatry as still openly practised in Judah (i. 4, 5), which were publicly put down by Josiah in the reformation which followed the discovery of Deuteronomy in the Temple in his 18th year, B.C. 621 (2 K. xxiii. 4, 5, 12); and the general picture of the moral and religious condition of the people, as implied in i. 8, 9, 12, iii. 1–4, 7, points also to the same period: the reformation is still in the future. Of the prophet himself nothing is known beyond what is stated in the title (i. 1); but inasmuch as his genealogy, contrary to the usual practice (see e.g. Is. i. 1; Hos. i. 1; Ez. i. 3), is carried back to the fourth generation, it has been inferred that his great-great-grandfather, Hezekiah, must have been a man of some note, and in fact that he was the king of that name; so that, if this inference be correct, Zephaniah will have been related to the royal family of Judah.

A passage from an apocryphal prophecy, ascribed to Zephaniah[2], is quoted by Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* v. 11, § 77): 'And the spirit took me, and carried me up into the fifth heaven, and I saw angels called lords, and their diadem placed upon them by the Holy Spirit, and the throne of each of them was seven times (brighter) than the light of the rising sun, dwelling in temples of salvation, and hymning the unspeakable God Most High.' Some other fragments, preserved in a Coptic version, have also been discovered and published lately: see Schürer, *Gesch. d. Volk. Isr.*, ed. 3, iii. 271 f.

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[1] The name means '(he whom) Yahweh hath hidden' (Ps. xxvii. 5, xxxi. 20, lxxxiii. 3).

[2] Cf. the apocryphal prophecy ascribed to Habakkuk (p. 50), the 'Ascension of Isaiah,' &c.

§ 2. THE CONTENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPHECY OF ZEPHANIAH.

The prophecy of Zephaniah may be divided conveniently into three parts—the *menace* (ch. i), the *admonition* (ii. 1—iii. 7), and the *promise* (iii. 8-20).

I. Chap. i. Here Zephaniah proclaims the approach of a universal judgement, which, embracing (*vv.* 2, 3) the world at large, will alight in particular upon Judah and Jerusalem, and carry off thence all idolaters and apostates (*vv.* 4-6). Let the earth be silent! for a 'day of Yahweh' is at hand, a day of sacrifice, in which the victims are the Jewish people, and those invited to partake in the sacrificial meal are the heathen nations, 'sanctified' for the occasion. Three classes are mentioned particularly as those whom the judgement will sweep away—viz. court officials, who either aped foreign fashions or were foreigners themselves, and who were addicted to corruption and intrigue; the Phoenician merchants in Jerusalem; and Jews sunk in unbelief and religious indifferentism (*vv.* 8-13). In *vv.* 14-18 the prophet develops the figure of the 'day of Yahweh,' describing the terrors by which it will be accompanied, and the onset of the fierce, inexorable foe, who will be the instrument for carrying out Yahweh's purposes.

II. Zephaniah now urges his people to repent, if perchance they may escape, in the day when the storm bursts (ii. 1-3). The Philistines, and Moab and Ammon, Judah's neighbours on the W. and E. (*vv.* 4-11), as also the more distant Ethiopia, and Nineveh (*vv.* 12-15), representing the great empire of Assyria, will all be overwhelmed by the judgement. From Nineveh the prophet turns to address Jerusalem: he reproaches her rulers and leading men with avarice, worldliness, and dishonesty; and blames her for her refusal to take warning from the fate which had overtaken other nations (iii. 1-7).

III. Let the faithful in Jerusalem, then, wait patiently, until the approaching judgement is completed (iii. 8), and the 'remnant of Israel,' purified of all its proud and worldly members, will in faith and humility cleave sincerely to its God, and dwell in safety upon their own land (iii. 11–14).

Vv. 9, 10 interrupt the connexion, and are perhaps the insertion of some later prophet: they are an anticipation,—like Is. ii. 2–4, xviii. 7, xix. 23–25, Jer. xiii. 19, for instance,—of the golden age in which the nations of the world will unite harmoniously in the service of Yahweh.

In conclusion the prophet, in jubilant tones, bids the purified nation exult in the God who now dwells, as a powerful and loving protector, in their midst (*vv.* 14–17), and who will bring back those still in exile, and give His restored people 'a name and a renown' among all the nations of the earth (*vv.* 18–20).

Marti has drawn out well the historical importance of Zephaniah's book. It is, he points out, an invaluable document, springing out of the years immediately preceding Josiah's reformation; for we hear in it a voice testifying to the religious and social condition of Jerusalem at the time, and evidently proceeding from the same prophetic circle in which the Deuteronomic law originated. We realize from it the opposition which then arose against the intrusion into Judah of foreign influences and foreign customs, which were undermining the national religion, and destroying the simplicity of life and manners which had been inherited from the past. Zephaniah is a true successor of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, who saw in the ascetic Nazirites genuine Israelites (Am. ii. 11), repudiated foreign rites as Baal-worship in disguise, and combated energetically the evils which the increasing luxury brought in its train, the oppression of the poor, injustice in trade (Am. viii. 5), and a supercilious disregard of Yahweh's moral demands. Zephaniah gives us a glimpse of the religious syncretism, which Manasseh had favoured and promoted; and makes us realize how the cults of neighbouring peoples, and especially of the Assyrians, had penetrated into Judah (Zeph. i. 4 f., 8 f.).

In his prophetic ideals Zephaniah follows largely in the footsteps of Isaiah. With Zephaniah, as with Isaiah, the central idea is that of a *judgement*, to be executed by Yahweh upon Judah, which will sweep away from it the idolaters, the men of violence and wrong, judges and others in high position who forget their responsibilities, false prophets and profane priests, the hardened men of the world who have no religion at all ('the men that are thickened upon their lees,' i. 12), and who think that Yahweh can do 'neither good nor evil,' and the impenitent who will not listen to 'correction' (i. 4–6, 8 f., 12, iii. 2, 3 f., 11); but which will leave behind a meek and pious 'remnant,' who trust simply in their God, and do their duty in every way to their neighbours (ii. 3, iii. 12, 13), who have no longer anything to fear from their ancient enemies (ii. 4–15), but live a life of peace and felicity under Yahweh's immediate kingship (ii. 7, iii. 14–17). This is, in general, the doctrine of Isaiah (i. 25–27, iv. 3–6, xxviii. 5 f., xxx. 19–26, 27–33, xxxi. 8 f., xxxii. 16–19; cf. on Zeph. iii. 11); though Zephaniah emphasizes more strongly than Isaiah does the particular virtue of 'humility.' But with Zephaniah the judgement, more distinctly than in Isaiah (iii. 13), is a *world*-judgement; it embraces all nations (i. 2 f., iii. 8), not Israel only (i. 4 ff.). The figure of Yahweh's 'Day' he doubtless owes to Is. ii. 12 ff.; but the imagery of war and invasion, under which its approach is pictured (i. 14–18), is Zephaniah's own, and was no doubt suggested to him by the recent irruption of hordes of Scythians into Asia (cf. p. 119), who seem also to be referred to in some of Jeremiah's prophecies dating from the same time (as Jer. v. 15–17, vi. 1–6, 22–25).

The great and abiding religious value of the book consists in the profoundly earnest moral tone which pervades it, and in the prophet's deep sense of the sin of his people and of the stern need which impels Yahweh, who would only too gladly rejoice over His people, if it would permit Him to do so (iii. 17), to visit it with a discipline which will purge away its unworthy members. Zephaniah's gospel has been described as 'simple and austere.' It is true, he goes back to and insists with pathetic eloquence upon the most primary and elementary of religious duties, earnestness and sincerity of life, justice and integrity, humility, and a simple trust in God. 'A thorough purgation, the removal of the wicked, the sparing of the honest and the meek; insistence only upon the rudiments of morality and religion; faith in its simplest form of trust in a righteous God, and character in its basal elements of meekness and truth—these alone survive the judgement' (G. A. Smith, p. 71). He does not, as other prophets commonly do, call the wicked to repent, or dwell upon the divine grace which is ever ready to forgive the penitent: it may be that the doom seemed to him to be too imminent; the time for pleading was past; there remained only the separation of the evil from the good. But he recognizes and teaches clearly the moral qualities which have a value in Yahweh's eyes, and which will not be swept away when the judgement comes (cf. Is. xxxiii. 14–16).

As happens, however, sometimes with the prophets, Zephaniah hardly presents a logical and consistent picture of the future. He does not explain what is to become of the nations alluded to in i. 13–18, after they have performed their work of judgement upon Israel. As Robertson Smith has pointed out (*EB.* iv. 5403–4), he seems to have borrowed the idea of a chastising nation from Isaiah, but to have developed it without that definite relation to present political facts which Isaiah's construction has: the foreign conqueror by whom Judah is to be chastised, and Nineveh and Ethiopia destroyed, is 'brought on the stage, but never,' like Isaiah's Assyrians, 'taken off it. It is safe to conclude that the principal actor in the prophetic drama,'—suggested, as Rob. Smith also thought, by the Scythians,—'was not as real and prominent a figure in Zephaniah's political horizon as Assyria was in the horizon of Isaiah.' And how in other respects is the future to be constituted? Is the purified Israel to be the sole nation left upon the earth? Even if ii. 11, iii. 10–11 be Zephaniah's, the relation between the nations who are converted and saved, and those who are destroyed (ch. ii, iii. 8), is not clearly defined. The fact is, the prophets project great ideals upon the future: while each picture, taken by itself, is the expression of a truth, they are not always careful to harmonize their ideals in details.

§ 3. CRITICAL QUESTIONS CONNECTED WITH THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH.

'The genuineness and integrity of the short Book of Zephaniah,' Robertson Smith wrote in 1888[1], 'do not seem to be open to reasonable doubt'; and he adds (in answer to Stade, who even then, on account of the ideas expressed in them, had questioned ii. 1–3, 11, iii) that 'though the sequence of thought is not as smooth as a Western reader may desire, a single leading motive runs through the whole, and the first two chapters would be incomplete without the third.' But times have changed since 1888; and now considerable parts of the book are regarded by most critics as later additions to the original prophecy of Zephaniah. Thus Kuenen in 1889, while defending ii. 1–3, 11 against Stade, allowed that iii. 14–20—on account, chiefly, of the great contrast between it and the denunciations of i. 2—ii. 1, iii. 1–7—was a supplement, dating probably from shortly after the restoration in B. C. 536. Wellhausen (1892, 1898) is suspicious of ii. 3, and rejects ii. $7^{a,c}$, 8–11; he treats ch. iii as an appendix, added subsequently in two stages, first iii. 1–7 (cf. Mic. vii. 1–6), and then iii. 8–20 (cf. Mic. vii. 7–20)—iii. 8–20 being separated from iii. 1–7 on account of the sudden change of tone and subject. Davidson (1896) defends ch. ii as a whole, admitting only (p. 102) that ii. 4–15 may in parts have been expanded : in ch. iii he is disposed to question *v.* 11 (which is textually obscure and uncertain), and *vv.* 14–20 (substantially upon Wellhausen's grounds). Nowack (1897, 1904) rejects ii. 3, $7^{a,c}$, 8–11, 15, iii. 9–10, 14–20. G. A. Smith (1898) accepts all ch. ii except *vv.* 8–11 ; in ch. iii he regards *vv.* 9–10 as 'obviously a later insertion,' and iii. 14–20 as clearly a lyrical epilogue of peace and hope (pp. 44 f.), a 'new song from God' (p. 73), which came to some prophet shortly after the return, and expressed for the remnant that survived, the 'afflicted and poor' people of *v.* 12, the brighter hopes which the restoration fostered. Marti, lastly (1904), retains for Zeph. only i. 7, 2, $3^{a\alpha}$, 4, 5, $8^{a\beta}$–11^{a}, 12, 13^{a}, 14–17 (except $17^{a\gamma}$), ii. 1, 2^{a}, 4, 5–7, 12–14—the rest of the book consisting of additions reflecting the hopes and feelings of later times, iii. 1–7 being added first ; then iii. 8, 11–15, 17–19, and various passages in chs. i, ii, for the purpose of changing the original prophecy of Zephaniah into an eschatological prophecy of the final judgement upon all men[1]; and, lastly, ii. 11 and iii. 9–10, expressing greater friendliness of feeling towards the heathen.

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[1] *Encycl. Brit.* s.v. (reprinted in the *Encycl. Biblica*).

It is difficult not to consider the grounds for so largely limiting the genuine text of Zeph. as sometimes arbitrary, and in other cases insufficient. Thus the principal reasons upon which ii. 8–11 is rejected are that there was no sufficient motive for the mention of these countries *c.* 625 B. C., and that the reproaches of ii. 8, 10 presuppose the destruction of Jerusalem in 586, which gave occasion for them (Ez. xxv. 3, 6, 8) ; but is our knowledge of the times sufficient to justify either of these contentions? It is also urged against ii. 8–11 that these verses differ metrically from the context (Nowack, Smith, pp. 42 f.; cf. Marti, who, however, has to alter *vv.* 5–7 to reduce them to metre). This argument would be weightier if the principles, and rules for the application, of Hebrew metrical forms were more clearly ascertained than they at present are; but though much has been written lately on the subject of Hebrew metre, and though Duhm and Marti have thrown,—often, it is true, at the cost of very considerable textual alterations,—the Psalms, and the whole of the poetical parts of Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Minor Prophets, into metrical forms[1], it may be doubted whether the time is yet ripe for making metre a criterion of authorship. As regards the later ideas alleged to occur in parts of Zeph., it may be questioned whether it has yet been conclusively shown that they point necessarily to an age later than that of Zephaniah himself. And it is difficult also to understand why iii. 14–20 should be deemed inconsistent with ch. i: for though Israel is threatened with judgements in ch. i, and is the recipient of promises in iii. 14–20, yet it is not the *same* Israel in the two cases: and where is the inconsistency in a prophet announcing judgements upon the degenerate Israel of the present, and promising blessings to the purified and regenerate Israel ('the remnant,' ii. 7, 9, iii. 12, 13) of the future? It is, however, possible that ii. 7^c and iii. 18–20 (presupposing restoration from *exile*: see on ii. 7), and ii. 11 and iii. 9 f. (on account of their very imperfect connexion with the context: see the notes), may be later additions to the original text of Zeph.: though, as Jeremiah, his younger contemporary, foresaw not only exile, but restoration from exile, Zephaniah himself may have added iii. 18–20 many years after the rest of his book was written, at a time when exile was seen more clearly to be inevitable than was the case in 626 or 625.

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[1] According to Marti, the judgement announced by Zephaniah included, besides Judah, only the Philistines, Kush, and Assyria.

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[1] Not, however, a *syllabic* metre, but a metre of *accents*, or *beats*.

ZEPHANIAH

THE word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah 1
the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of
Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the
son of Amon, king of Judah.
[Z] I will utterly consume all things from off the face 2
of the ground, saith the LORD. I will consume man and 3
beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the
fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the
wicked; and I will cut off man from off the face of

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i. 1. Title.

The word of Yahweh which came unto. The title, as Hos. i. 1; Joel i. 1; Mic. i. 1: the expression, *the word of Yahweh came* (היה = ἐγένετο Luke iii. 2), is also common besides, especially in Jer., Ezek., and Zech. i–viii.

the son of Hezekiah. See p. 103.

2–18. Description of the coming judgement. It falls first, with destructive force, upon the world at large, and afterwards in particular upon Judah and Jerusalem.

3. The 'all things' of *v.* 2 particularized: the judgement will sweep away not only man, the real offender, but beasts, and fowl, and fishes as well: cf. Gen. vii. 21, 23; for the inclusion of fishes, also, Hos. iv. 3, Ez. xxxviii. 19.

and the stumblingblocks with the wicked: i. e. all objects giving occasion to (moral and religious) 'stumbling' (cf. Mt. xiii. 41; Ez. xiv. 3, 4, 7), especially those connected with idolatry, together with the wicked themselves. The clause is, however, open to the suspicion of being an addition to the original text of Zeph., made by one who desiderated an express mention of the objects referred to; for 'it introduces an idea not in harmony with the rest of the verse' (Davidson); the 'wicked' are of course included implicitly in the terms of lines 1 and 4; and the word rendered 'stumblingblocks' does not elsewhere have this meaning, but signifies a 'fallen mass' (Is. iii. 6).

4 the ground, saith the LORD. And I will stretch ou
mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants o
Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from

4–6. But the prophet is concerned chiefly with the judgemen as it affects his own people; and he proceeds accordingly to describe the sins of Judah and Jerusalem, especially their idolatries which have called it forth. For Israel as the centre, or culminating point, of judgement, cf. Am. i–ii; Is. ii. 12—iii. 5, iii. 13–14.

4. stretch out mine hand upon: viz. in order to smite, a Is. xiv. 26, xxiii. 11 *al.*

the remnant of Baal. It seems clear that Zephaniah prophesied before the reformation in Josiah's 18th year; and hence the expression 'remnant' (which appears to imply that in the main the worship of Baal had been already extirpated) occasions difficulty. The supposition that the reference is to the idolatry that was spared in the reformation which, according to 2 Chron xxxiv. 3–7, took place in Josiah's 12th year, is questionable: for the historical character of that reformation is very doubtful it is not mentioned in the nearly contemporary narrative o 2 K. xxiii (2 Ch. xxxiv. 3–7 being not excerpted from this narrative, but an addition, evidently the composition of the Chronicler himself), and, in a matter of this kind, the unsupported testimony of the Chronicler alone (writing 350 years afterwards is of slight weight. However, it is thought by many (Ew., We. Now., Dav.) that 'the remnant' may mean '(even to) the las remnant,' 'the last vestiges' (cf. Is. xiv. 22): the meaning wil then be that the worship of Baal will be wholly destroyed out o Jerusalem; and of course this might be said before Josiah's reform. The LXX, however, for *remnant* (שאר) read *nam* (שם),—perhaps rightly (so Marti): cf. Hos. ii. 17; Zech. xiii. 2 as well as the next clause here.

Baal. The god of the Phoenicians and Canaanites, whose worship possessed a great fascination for the Israelites, and often made its way into both Israel (cf. 1 K. xviii; 2 K. x. 19) and Judah (2 K. xxi. 3; Jer. vii. 9, xi. 13, &c.). The word 'Baal signifies *owner*, *possessor*; and applied to a god it denotes him properly as the owner of a particular region or place (as Baal o Peor, Baal of Lebanon, Baal of Tyre, &c.): there were thus numerous local Baals (hence the plural, 'the Baalim,' Jer. ii. 2 *al.*),—Baal in the singular (in the Heb. 'the Baal') denoting the particular 'Baal' prominent at a given time or place. The Baals were regarded generally as the givers of the fruits of the soil, and the increase of the flocks, and were worshipped by offerings o the products of nature (Hos. ii. 7, 12, 13).

this place, *and* the name of the [a] Chemarim with the
priests; and them that worship the host of heaven upon 5
the housetops; and them that worship, which swear to
the LORD and swear by [b] Malcam; and them that are 6

[a] See 2 Kings xxiii. 5, Hos. x. 5. [b] Or, *their king*

Kĕmārim. In the sing. *kōmer*, an Aramaic word for 'priest,' found in inscriptions (G. A. Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, nos. 64, 65, 69, 98), and also common in Syriac: in the O. T. used only of idolatrous priests, and no doubt denoting properly the priests of foreign cults, introduced with their rites into Israel (so here); elsewhere applied contemptuously to the priests of an unspiritual or syncretistic worship of Yahweh, viz. Hos. x. 5, of the priests of the golden calves, and 2 K. xxiii. 5 of the priests of the high places, put down by Josiah.

with the priests: i. e. the degenerate regular priests of Yahweh.

5–6. Three classes of the laity particularized, who will also be swept away in the judgement.

5. (1) Those who practise open idolatry, and, in particular, **worship the host of heaven upon the housetops.** The allusion is to the worship of the heavenly bodies, a cult which became very prevalent in Judah in the later period of the Kings: see 2 K. xxi. 3, 5; Jer. viii. 2, xix. 13. The Israelites are warned against being seduced into it in Dt. iv. 19, xvii. 3.

upon the housetops. Where they would obtain a more open view of the objects of their adoration: cf. Jer. xix. 13, xxxii. 29; also 2 K. xxiii. 12.

(2) Those who worshipped Yahweh and 'Malcam' (see below) together, syncretistically.

which swear to Yahweh (i. e. swear fealty to Yahweh, Is. xix. 18, xlv. 25) **and swear by** this other god (i. e. and yet, when they come to take an oath, have the name of Milcom or Molech on their lips:—contrast the law of Dt. vi. 13, x. 20 'and *by his name* shalt thou swear')[1]. Such 'syncretism' was common in the polytheistic worships of antiquity; cf. in Israel Ez. xxiii. 39.

Malcam. As pointed by the Massorites this means 'their king.' Most moderns, altering the vocalization, read with Codd. 22, 36, 56 of LXX, Pesh., and Vulg., **Milcom**—the name of the turned back from following the LORD; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor inquired after him.

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[1] The clause is a little overloaded; and perhaps we should read simply, without altering the general sense, *and them that worship Yahweh, who swear by Milcom.*

7 Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD

national god of the Ammonites (1 K. xi. 5, 7 [read with LXX *Milcom* for *Molech*], 33; 2 K. xxiii. 13; Jer. xlix. 1, 3 [where the context relates to Ammon, so that *Milcom* is undoubtedly to be read, with LXX, Pesh., Vulg., for *Malcam*]). Although, however, Solomon, to gratify his foreign wives, built high places to Milcom (1 K., 2 K., *ll. cc.*) and other gods, the worship of Milcom is not alluded to elsewhere in the O. T., and does not seem, therefore, to have been prevalent in Israel; hence Davidson and G. F. Moore (*EB.* iii. 3085) think a reference to him here to be improbable; they accordingly retain the Mass. vocalization, but render **their king,** supposing the reference to be to the god who bore in particular the title of 'king,' i. e. Molech (or, as the name ought to be pronounced, *Milk*[1]), the Phoenician god, whose inhuman rites, as 2 K. xxiii. 10, Jer. vii. 31, Ez. xvi. 20 f., and other passages, sufficiently show, were prevalent in Judah in the age of Zephaniah.

6. (3) Those who have no thought or care for religion at all, who **are turned back from following Yahweh, and that have not sought Yahweh, nor inquired after him,** i. e. the religiously indifferent.

7. In view of this approaching judgement, the prophet pauses to bid all prepare to meet it with becoming reverence.

Hold thy peace: *lit.* **Hush!** or **Be still!** cf. on Hab. ii. 20.

for the day of Yahweh is at hand (or **near**). The same words, *v.* 14 (+*the great*), Ob. 15; Is. xiii. 6; Ez. xxx. 3; Joel i. 15, iii. 14 (cf. ii. 1). The 'day of Yahweh' is an expression used frequently by the prophets. From Am. v. 18 we learn that it was a current expression in Israel in Amos's time: the people believed that Yahweh would appear ere long, and confer some crowning victory upon His people, and they even 'desired' the advent of the day on which He would do this. Amos replies that whether this 'day' would be what they expected it to be depended upon their *moral* condition: it would be a day on which Yahweh would manifest Himself against *sin*, whether in His own

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[1] The name forms part of many Phoenician proper names, and is then so transliterated by the classical writers: e. g. *Milkyāthān*, 'Milk has given.' The Phoen. *Milk* ('Molech') must not be confused with the Ammonite 'Milcom'; they were two distinct deities (see 2 K. xxiii. 10, 13).

hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath [a]sanctified his guests.
And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD'S 8
sacrifice, that I will [b]punish the princes, and the king's

[a] See 1 Sam. xvi. 5. [b] Heb. *visit upon.*

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people or among foreign nations. Amos thus transformed a popular idea; and the prophets use the expression in this transformed sense to denote the day on which Yahweh is conceived as manifesting Himself in His fullness, striking down wrong and illusion and human pride (Is. ii. 12 ff.), and giving the final victory to righteousness and truth. The presentiment of the near approach of 'Yahweh's day' was often awakened in the minds of the prophets by some striking occurrence (as in Joel by a calamitous visitation of locusts), and especially by some great moral or political crisis. Cf. Davidson, *Theol. of the OT.*, pp. 374 ff.

prepared a sacrifice. The sacrifice, which is Israel, is slain, and the guests who are to eat of the sacrificial meal, i. e. the foes who are to execute the judgement upon Israel (cf. *vv.* 15-17), are invited. The perfects are 'prophetic' perfects: the prophet pictures the destruction of Judah as already accomplished. For the figure, cf. Jer. xlvi. 10, Is. xxxiv. 6, Ez. xxxix. 17. For 'guests' (lit. *called* or *invited ones*), cf. 1 K. i. 9 'called,' 41 'guests' (lit. *called ones*); and, at a sacrifice, 1 S. ix. 13 'they that be bidden (called),' 22, xvi. 3, 5. The foes whom Zephaniah in all probability has in his mind are the Scythians (cf. pp. 10, 119), whose movements in the North seem to have suggested to Jeremiah also at about the same time (cf. Jer. iv. 13, 15-17, 29, v. 15-17, vi. 22 f.) that they would ere long invade and ravage Judah, and who actually, on their way to Egypt, advanced through Palestine as far as Ashkelon (Hdt. i. 105).

sanctified: viz. to take part in the sacrificial meal: see 1 S. xvi. 5. There is, however, no doubt an allusion to the use of the same word of *war* and of *warriors*,—whether the idea was that a war undertaken in the name of the national god, Yahweh, was a holy one, or whether the reference was to the sacrifices with which a campaign was opened: see RVm. of Jer. vi. 4, xxii. 7, li. 27 f.; and cf. Is. xiii. 3, where Yahweh's 'consecrated (*or* sanctified) ones' mean the people who are to be the destroyers of Babylon.

8-12. The classes who in particular will be swept away by the judgement: viz. princes and court-officials who assumed foreign fashions, and perverted justice for purposes of gain (*v.* 8 f.); the merchants and traffickers in Jerusalem (*v.* 10 f.); and the Jews sunk in religious indifferentism (*v.* 12 f.).

8. punish. Heb. *visit upon*, as regularly, especially in Jer., as ix. 25, xi. 22, xiii. 21.

the princes: i. e. the nobles, especially those entrusted with

sons, and all such as are clothed with foreign apparel.
9 And in that day I will [a] punish all those that leap over the
threshold, which fill their master's house with violence
10 and deceit. And in that day, saith the LORD, there shall
be the noise of a cry from the fish gate, and an howling

[a] Heb. *visit upon.*

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judicial or other responsible offices, which they often abused (cf. iii. 3, Is. i. 23, Mic. vii. 3, Ez. xxii. 27; and contrast Is. xxxii. 1).

the king's sons. The expression means the royal house in general, and is not to be limited to the sons of the reigning king[1] (cf. 1 K. xxii. 26; 2 K. xi. 2; Jer. xxxvi. 26, xxxviii. 6).

with foreign apparel. Depreciating their own nationality, and parading their sympathy with some foreign country, such as Egypt or Assyria (Jer. ii. 18).

that leap over the threshold. The allusion appears to be to some superstitious foreign custom. It is a widespread belief, found in many parts of the world[2], that it is unlucky to step upon a threshold; and from 1 S. v. 5 we learn in particular that it was a Philistine custom not to tread upon the sacred threshold of a sanctuary (which is what the Hebrew word used here and elsewhere denotes, 1 S. *l. c.*, Ez. ix. 3 *al.*). The reference here is not improbably to the foreign bodyguard of the Jewish kings (cf. 2 S. xv. 18; 1 K. i. 38), who, like Oriental janissaries generally, were addicted to corruption and intrigue, and so could be spoken of as *filling their master's house with violence and deceit*[3].

10. No class of the population will, however, be spared: for the wail of lamentation will be heard from every quarter of the city when the judgement breaks.

the fish gate. So called, probably, from its being near the fish-market. It is mentioned besides in Neh. iii. 3, xii. 39; 2 Ch. xxxiii. 14; and appears from the first two of these passages to have been in the N. wall of the city, not far from the NW. corner. Judah was approached regularly from the N. by an invader (cf. Is. xiv. 31, Jer. i. 14): and this is doubtless the reason why one of the gates on the N. of Jerusalem is here mentioned first.

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[1] Josiah's two sons, Jehoiakim and Jehoahaz, would, in his 18th year, be not more than 12 and 10 years old respectively (see 2 K. xxiii. 31, 36).

[2] See Trumbull's *Threshold Covenant* (1896), pp. 10 ff.

[3] W. R. Smith, *Old Test. in the Jewish Church*, pp. 249 f.; ed. 2, pp. 261 f.

from the [a] second quarter, and a great crashing from the
hills. Howl, ye inhabitants of [b] Maktesh, for all [c] the 11
people of Canaan are undone: all they that were laden
with silver are cut off. And it shall come to pass at that 12

[a] Heb. *Mishneh*. [b] Or, *The mortar*
[c] Or, *the merchant people*

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the second (quarter). Mentioned also in 2 K. xxii. 14; the city was perhaps divided into districts for administrative purposes. Or (Hitz., Now., Dav.) the 'second quarter' may have been so named from its having been recently added to the city; in 2 Ch. xxxiii. 14 Manasseh is stated to have built an 'outer wall' extending as far as the fish gate, and the name may have been given to the ground thus enclosed. The site is not known.

and of a great crashing. Lit. *a great breaking* (Jer. iv. 6, vi. 1, xlviii. 3, l. 22, li. 54: EVV. 'destruction'): the noise of this resounds from the hills (גבעות, not הרים, Ps. cxxv. 2), upon which in particular the N. parts of Jerusalem were built.

11. the Maktesh. Evidently a part of the city in which traders dwelt,—perhaps (Ewald) the 'Phoenician quarter' of Jerusalem (see the next clause). The name means a *pounding place*, or 'mortar' (Prov. xxvii. 22), and is used fig. in Jud. xv. 19 of a depression in the ground, or 'hollow place.' No doubt it denotes here some basin-like hollow in the city, perhaps the upper part of the Tyropoeon valley (between the E. and W. hills on which Jerusalem was built). It may have been mentioned by the prophet here on account of the omen of its name: it is a place in which people will ere long be 'brayed' (Prov. xxvii. 22) or 'pounded' by the foe.

the people of Canaan. The expression is correctly paraphrased on the margin: the Canaanites, i. e. the Phoenicians (see Gen. x. 15, and cf. Is. xxiii. 11), were the chief traders in Palestine, and so the term came to be used to denote a merchant; see Is. xxiii. 8 (where 'traffickers' is lit. *Canaanites*), Zech. xiv. 21, Job xli. 6 ('merchants' is lit. *Canaanites*), Prov. xxxi. 24; and cf. Hos. xii. 7, Ez. xvi. 29 (where RVm. must be followed), xvii. 4 (where 'traffic' is lit. *Canaan*). However, the 'merchant people' here referred to were, no doubt, principally actual 'Canaanites,' or Phoenicians: cf. Neh. xiii. 16, where Tyrian traders sell fish in Jerusalem. It may be inferred from the present passage that they resided chiefly in the 'Maktesh.'

all they that were laden with silver. Or, **with money**; the allusion being to the Phoenician merchants, laden with their gains, or with the money required for the purchase of goods.

12. search. The word used implies minute and diligent

time, that I will search Jerusalem with [a] candles; and I will [b] punish the men that are [c] settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither
13 will he do evil. And their wealth shall become a spoil, and their houses a desolation: yea, they shall build houses, but shall not inhabit them; and they shall plant
14 vineyards, but shall not drink the wine thereof. The

[a] Heb. *lamps*. [b] Heb. *visit upon*. [c] Or, *thickened*

search: see e. g. 2 K. x. 23; and by a foe, as here, 1 K. xx. 6, Ob. 6.

with lamps: i. e. so that the darkest corners may be thoroughly explored (Luke xv. 8). The agents by whom the search will be accomplished are the foreign conquerors (cf. *v.* 13), who would naturally penetrate into the darkest places in quest of treasure (cf. Is. xlv. 3), and at the same time slay those whom they might find concealed in them.

thickened[1] **on their lees:** i.e. sunk into a state of moral stagnation and spiritual indifference. The figure is taken from wine, which, after the process of fermentation was complete, was left upon its sediment or 'lees' (Is. xxv. 16) 'only long enough to fix its colour and body. If not then drawn off, it grew thick and syrupy—sweeter indeed than the strained wine, and to the taste of some more pleasant, but feeble and ready to decay. "To thicken upon one's lees" became a proverb for sloth, indifference, and the muddy mind' (G. A. Smith, p. 52).

will not do good, &c. A proverbial expression, meaning, will not do anything at all, will, in other words, give no evidence that He exists. Cf. Gen. xxxi. 24; and see especially Is. xli. 23, Jer. x. 5. The men here referred to are those who were utterly indifferent with regard to Yahweh (cf. Ps. xiv. 1), and thought of Him as a lifeless heathen god (Jer. x. 5), who never asserted His power, and had no concern or regard for the affairs of human life.

13. Yahweh, whom they thus despise, will, however, assert Himself: He will 'search' Jerusalem by the hand of the foe; and their substance will be plundered, and their homes ruined.

they shall build houses, &c. Cf. Am. v. 11, Mic. vi. 15, Dt. xxviii. 30, 39; and contrast Is. lxv. 21.

14–18. Development of the figure of *v.* 7; and picture of the terrors of the approaching 'Day' of Yahweh. The imagery of

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[1] Or *stiffened, solidified* (Ex. xv. 8, Job x. 10). The rendering 'settled,' besides being incorrect, introduces confusion with a different word, with a different meaning, which is so rendered in Jer. xlviii. 11.

great day of the LORD is near, it is near and hasteth
greatly, *even* the voice of the day of the LORD; the
mighty man crieth there bitterly. That day is a day of 15
wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness
and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day
of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and 16

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the passage is suggested probably by the recent irruption into Asia of hordes of Scythians (Hdt. i. 103–6), a wild and fierce people, whose home was N. of the Crimea, but who, like the Huns or Bulgarians of a later day, were apt to make destructive predatory incursions into distant parts. The Scythians seem also to be the 'foe from the north' referred to, at about the same time, in many parts of Jer. iv–vi.

14. is near. Cf. on *v.* 7.

(even) **the voice,** &c. Render (after a colon at 'greatly'): **the sound of . . .!** i. e. in our idiom, **Hark! the day of Yahweh!**

the mighty man: i. e. the warrior: see on Nah. ii. 3.

there: the prophet localizes the scene in his imagination (cf. for this use of 'there' Ps. xiv. 5, xxxvi. 12); and sees the warrior *crying there bitterly*, unable to deliver himself (Am. ii. 14–16), and consequently in despair (Jer. xxx. 6 f., Is. xiii. 7).

15. That day is a day of wrath. These words, as rendered in the Vulgate, *Dies irae dies illa*, form the opening words of the well-known hymn of Thomas of Celano (A. D. *c.* 1250) on the Last Judgement.

wasteness and desolation. In the Hebrew an alliterative combination (cf. on Nah. ii. 11), which recurs in Job xxx. 3, xxxviii. 27.

a day of darkness, &c. These and the following words, to the end of the verse, are repeated by Joel (ii. 2) in his description of the coming Day of Yahweh. For the celestial manifestations accompanying Yahweh's 'Day,' cf. Am. v. 18, 20, viii. 9; Is. xiii. 10; Joel iii. 15.

16. Close of the description, showing that the Day will be one on which a foe advances with the alarm of war against the defences of Judah and Jerusalem.

of the trumpet (more exactly, **of the horn**[1]), **and of shouting**[2]: accompanying the assault of the foe. Cf. Am. i. 14 'with

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[1] See the writer's note on Am. ii. 2 in the *Camb. Bible for Schools.*

[2] 'Alarm' has in modern English lost the martial sense which it once expressed (Ital. *All' arme!* 'To arms!'), and expresses merely the general idea of consternation: it is thus no longer an adequate rendering of the Hebrew here.

alarm, against the fenced cities, and against the high
17 [a]battlements. And I will bring distress upon men, that
they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned
against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out
18 as dust, and their flesh as dung. Neither their silver nor
their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the
LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by
the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make an end,

[a] Or, *corner towers*

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shouting in the day of battle,' ii. 2 'and Moab shall die . . . amid *shouting*, and the sound of the *horn*.'

fenced. Render rather, **fortified:** 'fenced' being obsolete in the sense here intended. Cf. Is. ii. 15.

battlements. The word used signifies properly *corners* (Jer. xxxi. 38, 40), i. e., no doubt, fortified corners of the wall (cf. RVm.). So iii. 6, 2 Ch. xxvi. 15.

17. The verse expands the thought of the distress of *v.* 16. Men will be so bewildered by the calamity that they will be helpless, and as little able as the blind to find a way of escape (cf. for the figure Dt. xxviii. 29, Is. lix. 10); their blood will be poured out as though it were of as little account as dust (cf. 'like water,' Ps. lxxix. 3), and their flesh as if it were nothing better than dung.

sinned: in the manner described in *vv.* 4-6, 8-12.

their flesh. The word is not the usual Heb. word for 'flesh,' and the meaning has been questioned: but it has support from Arabic (cf. Job xx. 23[c] 'into his *flesh*').

as dung. The comparison (though the Heb. word used is different), as 1 K. xiv. 10, Jer. ix. 22.

18. Even their treasures will not be able to save their lives: cf. Ez. vii. 19 (almost the same words), Is. xiii. 17.

land (twice). This rend. suits the context (in which, from *v.* 4, Judah alone has been spoken of); but most moderns (Keil, We., Now., Dav.), observing that this verse closes the entire description, think it more likely that the prophet would revert to the thought with which he opened, *vv.* 2 f., viz. the universality of the judgement, and render therefore each time by **earth** (cf. iii. 8, where 'earth' is certainly right).

the fire of his jealousy. Cf. on Nah. i. 2. God's 'jealousy' is aroused by the dishonour shown towards Him, and the disregard of what is His rightful due: cf. Dt. iv. 24, xxix. 20; Ez.

yea, a [a]terrible end, of all them that dwell in the land.

Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O 2
nation that hath no [b]shame; before the decree bring 2

[a] Or, *speedy* [b] Or, *longing*

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xxxvi. 5, xxxviii. 19; Ps. lxxix. 5 (in which passages jealousy is also, as here, compared to fire). The entire clause is repeated in iii. 8 *end*.

yea: implying a slight but necessary correction (אַף for אַךְ).

a terrible end. Marg. Or, *a speedy end*. The Heb. includes both ideas, a *sudden terror* or *dismay* being what is denoted by it. Cf. the cognate subst. in Lev. xxvi. 16 ('terror'), Is. lxv. 23, Jer. xv. 8, Ps. lxxviii. 33. The clause seems suggested by Is. x. 23 (the word rendered 'consummation' there being the same as that which is rendered 'end' here).

ii. Having finished his picture of the impending judgement, the prophet now proceeds to urge his people to repent, if perchance they may escape the threatened doom (*vv.* 1–3), which will engulf, he declares, in succession, the Philistines, Moab and Ammon, Ethiopia, and even Nineveh, the proud capital of Assyria, itself (*vv.* 4–15).

Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together. The rendering is most uncertain. The Hebrew verb is formed from the Hebrew word for *stubble*, and means only *to gather like stubble* (Ex. v. 7, Nu. xv. 32); and a figurative application of such a verb either in the sense of *assembling together*, or (Keil) of *collecting oneself* mentally, for self-examination and reflection, the first step towards repentance, is most improbable. Read probably (with Grätz, Cheyne, and Budde), changing two letters, **Get you shame, and be ye ashamed, O nation unabashed**[1].

2. The ground for the exhortation in *v.* 1: be ashamed, and repent of your past lives, before the judgement overtakes you, and it is too late.

before the decree,—i.e. God's decree of judgement,—**brings forth,** i.e. takes effect (cf. Prov. xxvii. 1). The next words, as they stand, can be rendered only as a parenthesis, as they are on

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[1] This meaning for נִכְסָף is supported by the sense of the root in Aramaic (see the Targ. of Ps. xxxv. 4, lxix. 7). RVm. *that hath no longing* understands the verb in the meaning it has elsewhere in Hebrew (Gen. xxxi. 30; Ps. lxxxiv. 2): but the sense thus obtained is incomplete, 'for God' or 'for amendment' being more than could be reasonably understood without being expressed.

forth, [a] *before* the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the
3 LORD's anger come upon you. Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgement; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be

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[a] Or, *(the day passeth as the chaff,)*

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the margin: *the day,*—i.e. the time of respite till the decree takes effect,—*passeth* away rapidly *as the chaff*. But both these opening clauses are expressed unnaturally, and yield a forced sense; and there is little doubt that the true text is that restored by Grätz and Wellh., on the basis of the LXX: **before ye become as chaff that passeth away.** For the comparison with chaff, cf. Ps. i. 4.

before the day, &c. The clause reads like an explanation of the more general words, 'the fierceness of Yahweh's anger,' in the preceding clause: as the Syriac translation of the Hexaplar text of the LXX shows, it was not part of the original LXX; and recent scholars are generally disposed to regard it as a gloss.

3. As the judgement is thus near, let the faithful, especially, *seek Yahweh* in prayer and supplication (2 S. xii. 16, Hos. v. 6), if perchance they may escape the calamity which will engulf their neighbours; let them follow, even more earnestly than before, *righteousness and meekness.*

all ye meek of the land. So Is. xi. 4, Ps. lxxvi. 9. **Humble** would, however, be a better rendering than 'meek'; for the Heb. *'ānāw* predicates not an attitude towards men, but an attitude towards God, and denotes one who *bows* or humbles himself under the hand of God. The word is often used in the prophets and Psalms (e.g. xxxvii. 11) of the pious and faithful worshippers of Yahweh, as opposed to the 'wicked,' the 'evil-doers,' the 'proud,' &c. From another side of their character the same God-fearing Israelites are often spoken of as the 'poor,' or the 'afflicted': see on iii. 12.

his judgement. Rather, **his ordinance,** as the word is often rendered (e.g. Is. lviii. 2, Jer. viii. 7). Properly, indeed, it means the *judgement* or *decision* of a judge: then it comes to mean (as Ex. xxi. 1) a 'judgement' which is made a statute of permanent obligation; and finally, in a wider sense, it is used of a moral or religious ordinance, whether it has originally been prescribed as a particular 'judgement' or not. So Jer. v. 4, 5 (cf. viii. 7).

it may be ye shall be hid, &c. For the figure, cf. Is. xxvi. 20. 'Even amidst what looks like absolute certainty of the Divine judgement, the prophets cannot renounce the idea of the possibility

hid in the day of the LORD's anger. For Gaza shall be 4
forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive
out Ashdod at the noonday, and Ekron shall be rooted
up. Woe unto the inhabitants of [a] the sea coast, the 5

[a] Or, *the region of the sea*

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of the people's repenting and averting the impending wrath: cf. Jer. vii. 5–7, xxvi. 3, xxxvi. 3, 5; Am. v. 6, 15' (Davidson). These 'humble' are naturally those of whom the 'remnant' of *vv.* 7, 9, iii. 12 f. consists, who are to escape the judgement, and form the nucleus of the purer community of the future.

4–14. The ground of the preceding exhortation ('For,' *v.* 4): the entire heathen world, represented partly by some of Israel's nearest neighbours, partly by ancient and famous nations further off, will be overwhelmed by the judgement. The nations mentioned are intended to represent the world at large.

4–7. The Philistines were old enemies of the Israelites, and ready to harass them whenever the opportunity offered: hence many of the prophets have oracles against them (Am. i. 6–8; Is. xiv. 29–32; Jer. xlvii; Ez. xxv. 15–17; Zech. ix. 5 f.).

4. The places mentioned are four of the five principal Philistine cities (1 S. vi. 17), the fifth being Gath. In the Hebrew for 'Gaza shall be forsaken' (*'azzāh 'ăzūbāh*), and 'Ekron shall be rooted up' (*'eḳrōn tē'āḳēr*), there are assonances, such as the Hebrew prophets love, which cannot be reproduced in English (cf. Mic. i. 10 ff., Ez. xxv. 16): each city will fulfil, as it were, the omen of its name.

forsaken: i. e. depopulated; cf. Is. vi. 12, vii. 16.

drive out Ashdod: i. e. expel forcibly (Ex. xxiii. 28–30) its inhabitants.

at the noonday. At the time of the noonday siesta (2 S. iv. 5), and implying consequently a sudden surprise (cf. Jer. xv. 8 'a spoiler at noonday').

5. The entire people and land of the Philistines are here addressed.

Ah! the inhabitants of the region of the sea (RVm.): i. e. of the strip of territory on the Mediterranean Sea, on the W. of Judah, belonging to the Philistines: cf. Ez. xxv. 16 ('the remnant of the sea coast,' of the Philistines then remaining). 'Coast' in RV. is here an archaism, the word being used in its now obsolete sense of *side* (Fr. *côte*, Old-Fr. *coste*, Lat. *costa*, a *rib*), *border*, *part*, which it often has in AV. (as Ex. x. 4; Dt. ii. 4, xi. 24, xvi. 4, xix. 8,—all changed in RV. to 'border'; Mt. ii. 16, viii. 34, xv. 21; Acts xix. 1), in RV. retained only here and *vv.* 5, 6. For *Ah!* see on Nah. iii. 1.

nation of the Cherethites! The word of the LORD is against you, O Canaan, the land of the Philistines; I
6 will destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant. And the sea coast shall be pastures, with [a] cottages for shep-

[a] Or, *caves*

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the Chĕrēthites. Apparently the name of a clan, or subdivision, of the Philistines, mentioned besides in 1 S. xxx. 14, and Ez. xxv. 16. Most probably so called as being immigrants from *Crete*; cf. Am. ix. 7, Dt. ii. 23, which state that the Philistines were immigrants from 'Caphtor,' which is generally identified with Crete.

Canaan. Applied unusually to the land of the Philistines: see, however, Jos. xiii. 3. Wellh., Now. omit it, reading at the same time 'against thee' for 'against them': but the LXX express the same Hebrew text which we have now.

6. RV. is singularly simple and flowing; and no reader would suspect from it the extraordinary Hebrew of which in the middle clause it purports to be the translation. The word rendered 'cottages,' or (RVm.) 'caves,' is otherwise unknown in either sense: and 'with' is a thoroughly illegitimate paraphrase. The text cannot be correct. LXX render (as if they read כרת נוה for נות כרת): *And Chĕrēth* (i. e. the land of the Chĕrēthites, *v.* 5) *shall become an habitation*[1] *of shepherds* (Jer. xxx. 12), *and folds for flocks* (the country, viz., being depopulated; cf. Is. v. 17, xxvii. 10, Ez. xxv. 5): we may either adopt this, or, treating כרת as a faulty repetition of נות, render simply, *And it shall become an habitation*, &c.[2]

7. The Philistine country will become a pasture-ground for the remnant of Judah: they will feed their flocks by the sea, and come to rest for the night in the deserted houses of Ashkelon. For the thought of Israel in the future taking possession of the territory of its neighbours, cf. Am. ix. 12, Is. xi. 14, Jer. xlix. 2, Obad. 19-20.

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[1] RV. 'pastures': but נוה—properly, a *homestead*, or *country habitation* (Is. xxvii. 10, xxxii. 18), but sometimes used more generally, as Ex. xv. 13, Prov. iii. 33 (*Lex.* 627^b)—does not mean this, except in so far as a habitation for flocks would be a 'pasture' (Is. lxv. 10); in Ez. xxv. 5 it is even rendered 'stable.' (Read נְוֵה, not נוֹת, an anomalous and improbable form of the plural.)

[2] חבל הים (RV. 'the sea coast'), at the beginning of the verse, seems to have come in here by error from *v.* 7 (where both words must have once stood: see the note on that verse): observe that והיתה ('shall be') does not agree in gender with חבל.

herds and folds for flocks. And the coast shall be for the 7
remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed *their flocks*
thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down
in the evening; [A] for the LORD their God shall visit
them, and bring again their captivity. [Z] I have heard 8
the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children

And the coast. Read, with LXX, **And the region of the sea,** as *v.* 5.

the remnant of the house of Judah: i.e. those who escape the coming judgement, and, it is implied (see on iii. 11), are righteous, and worthy of God's favour and protection.

thereupon. The Hebrew is *upon* (or *by*) *them.* Read with We., Now., Smith, Marti, **by the sea** (על הים for עליהם).

lie down. The word means *to lie down* as an animal (cf. *v.* 14): but it is used here fig. of men, as iii. 13, Is. xiv. 30, Job xi. 19.

visit. In a favourable sense, as Jer. xxvii. 22, xxix. 10.

and turn their captivity. The prophet pictures, therefore, the 'remnant' as in exile. This, however, though not impossible in itself, agrees badly with the representation in *v.* 3 (where Zephaniah holds out to the godly Israelites the hope that they will escape the coming judgement, and consequently not be carried into exile); so that perhaps this and the last clause are a later addition, made by one who did not notice the inconsistency with *v.* 3.

8–11. The judgement is addressed next to Moab and Ammon, two kindred peoples, who had often in the past shown themselves unfriendly towards Israel, and manifested a haughty and encroaching spirit. The territory of Moab was on the E. of the Dead Sea: that of Ammon was on the NE. of Moab, their principal town being Rabbah (2 S. xii. 26, 29; Jer. xlix. 2), called by the Greeks Philadelphia.

8. I have heard. The speaker is Yahweh (see *v.* 9). The words read like a reminiscence of Is. xvi. 6 (cf. Jer. xlviii. 29).

the reproach of Moab, &c. Contemptuous and reproachful words uttered against Israel or Yahweh, such as the taunts in Ez. xxv. 3, 6, 8 (cf. xxi. 28), spoken at the time when Jerusalem was taken and burnt by the Chaldaeans (B. C. 586),—though this cannot be the occasion actually referred to, unless indeed (see p. 109) *vv.* 8–10 are an addition to the original prophecy of Zephaniah made by a later writer. The attitude of Moab, especially, towards Israel seems to have been in general arrogant and overweening: cf. 2 S. x. 4; Is. xvi. 6, xxv. 11; Jer. xlviii. 26, 27, 29-30 (expansion of Is. xvi. 6), 42.

of Ammon, wherewith they have reproached my people,
9 and magnified themselves against their border. Therefore as I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, a possession of [a] nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my nation

[a] Or, *wild vetches*

---

against their border. In the endeavour to enlarge their own territory: cf. (of the Ammonites) Am. i. 13, Jer. xlix. 1.

9. as Sodom . . . and as Gomorrah. The site of which is referred to elsewhere also as a salt and barren plain, a type of desolation (Dt. xxix. 23; Is. xiii. 19; Jer. xlix. 18 = l. 40).

of nettles. The rendering is uncertain: but, whatever the *ḥārūl* may have been, it must have been a plant characteristic of uncultivated places (Job xxx. 7; Prov. xxiv. 31). 'Thorns' in Prov. xxiv. 31 ought to be 'nettles' (cf. Hos. ix. 6, Is. xxxiv. 13); hence *ḥārūl*, which stands in the parallel clause, must be something different; and in Syriac *ḥūrōl* signifies a *vetch* (hence RVm.). On the other hand, Job xxx. 7 seems to require some kind of shrub; and whereas the present passage implies that the *ḥārūl* would grow in a poor or salt soil, vetches love a good soil. Tristram (*NHB.* 475) suggests the *Prickly Acanthus*; Post (*DB.* s. v.) some kind of thorny shrub such as the *Boxthorn*, three species of which are indigenous in Palestine, and grow in waste places and salty soil.

saltpits. The comparison is suggested by the country bordering on the Dead Sea. At the SW. of this sea there is a remarkable range of cliffs, some 600 feet high, and 5 miles long, called *Jebel Usdum*, composed almost entirely of salt—deposited in the remote period when the whole of the Jordan valley, and the depression containing the Dead Sea itself, was a great inland lake. Salt for Jerusalem is still procured chiefly from this district, being partly cut directly from the salt cliffs, partly obtained from pits dug into the sand or slime of the shore, into which the waters of the Dead Sea are admitted, and then allowed to evaporate (cf. the allusion in 1 Macc. xi. 35).

spoil them . . . possess them. The pronouns must refer to 'Moab' and 'the children of Ammon,' the prophet turning from the contemplation of their territory to that of the peoples themselves: they will be plundered by the 'remnant' of Israel, and taken by them for their own possession as slaves (cf. for the thought Is. xiv. 2, lxi. 5).

shall inherit them. This shall they have for their pride, 10
because they have reproached and magnified themselves
against the people of the LORD of hosts. [A] The LORD 11
will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods
of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from
his place, even all the [a] isles of the nations. [Z] Ye 12

[a] Or, *coast-lands*

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10. This verse finishes and rounds off the passage on Moab and Ammon by repeating the thought of *v.* 8.

11. Heathen gods will be overthrown; and men generally will worship Yahweh. The verse agrees badly with its context: the fact that Yahweh will overthrow the heathen gods in general does not seem to be a natural reason ('for') for the destruction of Moab and Ammon; and *v.* 12, instead of pursuing the thought of v. 11b, resumes the enumeration of particular nations (like *vv.* 4-9) upon whom the judgement will alight. Many recent scholars think the verse to be an addition by a later writer, who desiderated here some expression of the two thoughts of the destruction of heathen gods, and the recognition of Yahweh by the world in general.

unto them. Over them,—appearing over them in judgement (Zech. ix. 14). The pron. (as the verse stands) refers to Moab and Ammon.

famish. Better, **make lean:** for the figure, as expressing the weakening or failing of a nation or army, see Is. x. 16, xvii. 4. It is, however, somewhat strange as applied to heathen gods: if the text is correct[1], the meaning will be that they will be rendered powerless by Yahweh, and so be unable to defend their worshippers; for the general thought Is. xix. 1-3, Ez. xxx. 13 might then be compared.

and men shall worship him, &c. Being brought to perceive the unreality of heathen gods, by their inability to save the peoples who trusted in them.

every one from his place: i. e. each from the place in which he lives, without,—at least necessarily,—making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, such as the prophets usually picture the nations as making, after they have been brought to the knowledge of Yahweh, for purposes of worship (Is. ii. 3, lxvi. 23; Zech. viii. 22, xiv. 16).

all the isles of the nations. The word rendered *isles*

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[1] In any case רִזָּה must be read for the intransitive רָזָה.

13 Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by my sword. And he
will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy
Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry
14 like the wilderness. And herds shall lie down in the
midst of her, [a] all the beasts of the nations: both the

[a] Or, *all beasts of* every *kind*

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includes also *coast-lands* (RVm.), being used primarily of the islands and jutting promontories of the Mediterranean Sea (see Gen. x. 5, Ez. xxvi. 15, 18), though sometimes, especially in the Second Isaiah (e. g. xli. 1, xlix. 1, li. 5), these are taken as representative of the heathen world generally. And the latter, no doubt, is the sense in which the expression is used here.

12. Ethiopians. Heb. *Kushites* (see on Nah. iii. 9), on the S. of Egypt, taken as an example of a distant (Is. xi. 11) and also famous (Is. xviii. 1 f.) nation, upon which Yahweh's judgement will alight.

also. As well as the Philistines and Moab and Ammon (*vv.* 4–7, 8–10).

slain by my sword. Cf. Is. lxvi. 16, Jer. xxv. 33.

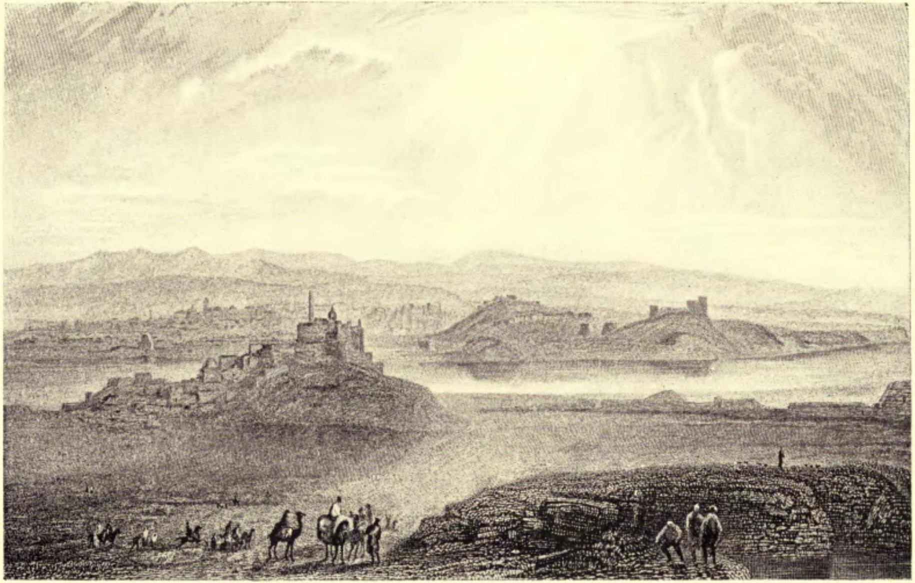
13–15. In the opposite direction Nineveh, the proud and magnificent capital of Assyria, will be humbled, and become a desolation.

13. against the north. Nineveh was 550 miles NE. of Judah; but Assyrian armies having Palestine as their goal would naturally cross the Euphrates at the great ford of Carchemish, 300 miles W. of Nineveh, and so would make their entrance into Palestine from the north (cf. on i. 10). Hence Assyria, and even Babylon (Zech. ii. 6), though this was due E. of Judah, are designated as the 'north.' See further 'NORTH COUNTRY' in *DB*.

14. The desolation of Nineveh: its site will become the haunt of wild animals, especially of such as frequent ruins. Cf. the pictures of Babylon in Is. xiii. 21 f., and of Edom in Is. xxxiv. 13–15. The fate of Nineveh is thus worse than that of the Philistine land (*v.* 6): the Philistine land is depopulated, and becomes a pasture-ground for flocks; Nineveh becomes a waste, haunted only by desert animals.

herds. As the sequel shows, not of domestic animals, but of wild creatures.

all the beasts of the nations. The text cannot be in order, 'the nations' being an impossible rendering of גוי, and RVm. implying the addition of a word, 'every' (כל: cf. Gen. vii. 14, Ez. xvii. 23, 2 Ch. xxxii. 15), besides giving to גוי the otherwise unsubstantiated sense of 'kind.' We may read גוים 'nations';



Drawing by J. M. W. Turner, R.A.

NINEVEH

pelican and the porcupine shall lodge in the chapiters thereof: *their* voice shall sing in the windows; [a]desolation shall be in the thresholds: for he hath laid bare the cedar

[a] Or, *drought*

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or we may follow LXX and read ‘all the beasts *of the earth*’ (as Gen. i. 24, Ps. lxxix. 2), supposing (Marti) ארץ to have fallen out in the Heb. text, and גוי to be a faulty anticipation of the following גם; or, with Halévy, read ‘of the *valley*’ (גיא for גוי).

the pelican and the porcupine. The pelican is mentioned in Ps. cii. 6, the porcupine in Is. xiv. 23, and both together in Is. xxxiv. 11,—each time as haunting a solitude, or ruined site. The pelican lives upon fish: it abounds, for instance, in the great sandy wastes near the mouths of the Danube, and in the swamps of the Jordan valley and the Orontes. The porcupine is a shy, solitary animal, which might well choose its home among desolate ruins (*DB.*, s. v. ‘BITTERN,’ as the Heb. *kippōd* was rendered in AV.). The correctness of the rendering ‘porcupine’ has been questioned upon zoological grounds; but the ancient versions all so render, and this is also the meaning of the corresponding words in Arabic and Syriac (see further on this question McLean and Shipley in *EB.*, s. v. ‘BITTERN’). The rendering ‘bittern’ (AV.) appears to have no authority earlier than the sixteenth century.

in the chapiters thereof: i. e. in the carved tops of the pillars (1 K. vii. 16, 17, &c.), belonging to the temples or palaces of Nineveh, and pictured as now prostrate upon the ground.

(their) **voice shall sing in the windows.** The expression is unnatural: read with We., Now., Smith, &c., **the little owl** for ‘(their) voice’ (כוס for קול),—one of the three species of owl mentioned in Lev. xi. 17 f., which is shown by Ps. cii. 6 to have been accustomed to haunt desert places or ruins. The ‘little owl’ is ‘by far the most abundant of all the owls of Palestine,’ and ‘in the tombs or on the ruins, among the desolate heaps which mark the sites of ancient Judah, his low, wailing note is sure to be heard at sunset’ (Tristram, *NHB.* 194 f.). Or perhaps, with Halévy, as the owl hardly ‘sings,’ *the voice of the great owl* (ינשוף for ישורר) *shall be in the windows, of the raven in the thresholds.* The ‘great owl’ (Lev. xi. 17), also called the ‘eagle-owl,’ is likewise abundant in ruins (Is. xxxiv. 11 Heb.: *NHB.* 193). The ‘windows’ are of course those of the now uninhabited and neglected palaces and temples.

desolation. Read with LXX, Ew., We., &c., **the raven** (ערב for חרב): and see Is. xxxiv. 11. The raven also is a bird that loves desolate places, frequenting, for instance, the barren cliffs and shores of the Dead Sea (Tristram, *NHB.* 201).

the cedar work. With which the walls of her palaces and

15 work. This is the joyous city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none else beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand.

3 Woe to her that is rebellious and polluted, to the

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temples were panelled (cf., in Jerusalem, 1 K. vi. 9, 10, &c., vii. 3, 7): this will now be laid open to wind and rain. The Assyrian kings often speak of the cedar brought by them from Lebanon, Amanus, &c., to beautify their buildings (cf. p. 83 *n.*).

15. Close of the description. Such will then be the once proud and careless city,—a desolation, a resort of wild animals, an object of derision to all who pass by her site!

joyous. Or, **exulting** (iii. 11). The word used suggests the idea of exuberant joy, unrestrained by any thought of responsibility or care: cf. Is. xxii. 2, xxiii. 7, xxxii. 13; also v. 14.

I am, and there is none beside me. A proud expression of Nineveh's sense of her unique imperial position. The same words, as also the preceding ones, from 'that dwelt carelessly,' are repeated in Is. xlvii. 8 with reference to Babylon, the successor of Nineveh as the imperial city of Western Asia.

how . . .! An expression of amazement at such a tragic turn of fortune: cf. Jer. l. 23, li. 41.

every one that passeth by her shall hiss. In scorn and hatred. Cf. with the entire clause 1 K. ix. 8, Jer. xix. 8 = xlix. 17 = l. 13: *hiss*, also, Ez. xxvii. 36 and elsewhere.

and shake his hand. In anger and aversion. This expression does not occur elsewhere: we have only *shake the head* (viz. in derision), Lam. ii. 15, Ps. xxii. 7.

On the fall of Nineveh in B.C. 607, and subsequent desolation of its site, see above, pp. 10 f.

iii. 1–7. The prophet here returns to Jerusalem. He describes afresh the sins rampant within her, especially the sins of her ruling classes, princes, judges, prophets, and priests; and blames her, in Yahweh's name, for her refusal to take warning from the example of her neighbours.

1. Ah! she that is defiant and polluted, the oppressing city! For *Ah!* see on Nah. iii. 1.

rebellious. Better, **defiant.** *Mārāh* is to *resist contumaciously*, and is nearly always used of an obstinate refusal to listen to Yahweh's will (e.g. Dt. i. 26, 43; Is. i. 20; Ps. lxxviii. 8, 17, 40, 56): though commonly rendered 'rebel,' 'rebellious,' it thus corresponds more closely to 'defy,' 'defiant.' (To 'rebel,' both

oppressing city! She obeyed not the voice; she received 2
not [a]correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew
not near to her God. Her princes in the midst of her 3
are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they
[b]leave nothing till the morrow. Her prophets are light 4

[a] Or, *instruction*

[b] Or, *gnaw not the bones on the morrow*

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politically (2 K. xxiv. 1), and religiously (Ez. ii. 3), is *mārad*: *mārāh* is never used of political rebellion).

polluted, viz. by sins of various kinds. The word is a rare and late one—in Lam. iv. 14, Is. lix. 3, used in particular of pollution by bloodshed.

the oppressing city. Alluding especially to the oppressions and extortions practised by the upper classes upon their less fortunate neighbours: see, for instance, Is. i. 23, v. 8–10, 23, x. 2, Mic. ii. 2, iii. 1–3, Jer. vii. 6, xxii. 3, 13. Ez. xxii. 29 shows, however, that the people generally shared the same faults.

2. Development of the thought of Jerusalem's 'defiance,' *v.* 1: she would not listen to Yahweh's voice, or be reformed, but turned persistently from Him.

obeyed. Lit. (as always) *hearkened unto.*

the voice: i. e. the voice of God by the prophets: Jer. vii. 23, xi. 4, 7, and often.

received . . . correction. A favourite expression of Jeremiah's (Jer. ii. 30, v. 3, xvii. 23, xxxii. 33, xxxv. 13): compare especially vii. 28 'This is the nation that hath *not hearkened unto the voice* of Yahweh their God, nor *received correction*.' 'Instruction' (marg.) means *moral education*: cf. Ps. l. 17; Prov. i. 8, xii. 1, xiii. 1, 18, &c.

she trusted not, &c. Distrusted His promises, disbelieved in His power to help or save (cf. i. 12); and consequently, hoping for nothing from Him, *drew not near to* Him.

3. The sins of the leading classes particularized in detail. Like the prophets generally (e. g. Am. vi. 1; Is. i. 23, iii. 14; Mic. iii. 1, 9), it is especially the official and responsible classes whose sins and neglect of duty Zephaniah denounces.

Her princes. As in i. 8 (cf. Is. i. 23; Ez. xxii. 27), the nobles, in whose hands lay the judicial and governing power.

roaring lions. Ready at any moment to seize and rend the prey: cf. Prov. xxviii. 15, Ez. xxii. 25.

evening wolves. So Hab. i. 8, where see the note.

The extortion of superior officials, the corruption of justice, and judicial murders, are crying vices in Oriental countries; and the denunciations of the prophets show that they were only too prevalent in ancient Israel as well.

leave nothing till the morning: so voracious are they.

and treacherous persons: her priests have profaned the
5 sanctuary, they have done violence to the law. The
Lord in the midst of her is righteous; he will not do
iniquity; [a] every morning doth he bring his judgement

[a] Heb. *morning by morning.*

But the rendering 'leave' is very doubtful, depending upon a questionable combination with an Arabic and Aramaic verb. That of the marg. (which has the support of Nu. xxiv. 8, Ez. xxiii. 34) implies that all is devoured voraciously over-night; though the words might also be rendered, 'her judges are evening wolves, (which) *gnawed* not bones in the morning,' and so were doubly hungry and ferocious in the (following) evening.

light. I. e., as often in Old English (e. g. Jud. ix. 4), *marked by levity, thoughtless, frivolous.* But *pōḥēz* means rather *unrestrained, reckless,*—in Jud. ix. 4 (see Moore) reckless in action, here reckless in assertion, boastful: the prophets referred to being men eager for notoriety, who, 'instead of being humble declarers of the will of God, sought to give utterance to their own ideas' (Hitz.). Cf. Jer. xxiii. 32, where the cognate subst. *recklessness* (RV. *vain boasting*) is also used of the prophets. The delusive promises of the 'false prophets,' who sought by making them to gain popularity, are often alluded to: see e. g. Mic. iii. 11; Jer. xiv. 13 f., xxiii. 16 f., 26 f., xxvii. 9 f., 16, xxviii. 2 ff.

treacherous. Or, **faithless,** viz. against God, by giving out their own imaginations as revelations from Him (Hitz., Keil).

have profaned that which is holy (not 'the sanctuary'), **they have done violence to the law.** Ez. xxii. 26 is an explanatory parallel: 'Her priests have *done violence to my law,* and *have profaned mine holy things*; they have put no difference between the holy and the common [cf. xliv. 23, Lev. x. 10, xx. 25], neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean [Lev. xi], and they have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned in their midst.' Cf. also Jer. ii. 8, v. 31 [RVm.]. With *vv.* 4, 5 cf. especially Ez. xxii. 25–28, where rulers [so read for 'prophets' in *v.* 25, with LXX, and all moderns], priests, princes, and prophets are denounced successively, and the language is often remarkably similar to that used here. 'Law' is here, as always, properly *direction* (Hab. i. 4).

5. And they do all this, undeterred by the fact that Yahweh is in their midst, giving daily evidence of the righteousness of His rule.

he doeth no unrighteousness: cf. Dt. xxxii. 4.

morning by morning. For the thought of morning as the time of judgement, cf. Jer. xxi. 12, Ps. ci. 8. The Hebrew idiom (cf. marg.; and see G.-K. § 123^c), as Ex. xvi. 21, Is. l. 4, and elsewhere.

to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame.
I have cut off nations, their [a] battlements are desolate; 6
I have made their streets waste, that none passeth by:
their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that
there is none inhabitant. I said, Surely thou wilt fear 7
me, thou wilt receive [b] correction; so her dwelling should
not be cut off, [c] *according to* all that I have appointed
concerning her: but they rose early and corrupted all

[a] Or, *corner towers* [b] Or, *instruction*
[c] Or, *howsoever I punished her*

---

he bringeth his judgement to light. In so far as, to those who will see it, both the daily life of individuals and the history of nations (*v.* 6) afford examples of the righteous being rewarded, and the wicked punished. Cf. Hos. vi. 5 (reading as RVm.); also Ps. xxxvii. 6.

he faileth not. Or better, perhaps, **it** (his judgement) **faileth not.** So Keil, Nowack.

but the unrighteous knoweth no shame. Is unmoved by the evidences of Yahweh's righteousness, and continues, without any sense of shame, in his course of wrong-doing.

6. Yahweh is now introduced abruptly as speaking, and reminding Israel of the evidences of His righteousness afforded by history.

battlements. See on i. 16.

so that none passeth through: Jer. ix. 10, 12; Ez. xiv. 13.

so that there is no man: Is. vi. 11; Jer. xxxii. 43, xxxiii. 10, 12.

that there is no inhabitant. As ii. 5, Is. v. 9, vi. 11, and eight times in Jeremiah.

7. Yahweh desired and hoped that Israel would take warning by such examples, but was disappointed: on the contrary, Israel the more strenuously corrupted their doings.

I said: i. e., as frequently (e. g. Is. lxiii. 8), *I said mentally, I thought.*

(according to) **all,** &c. The ellipse is greater than is legitimate; nor does the sense obtained agree well with 'so her dwelling,' &c. There is little doubt but that we should read, by a very slight change in one word, with LXX, We., Now., &c. (after 'correction'), *and nothing that I have enjoined her will be cut off* (*=fade*) *from her sight*, i. e. she will continually keep My commandments before her (cf. Ps. xviii. 22).

but. In the Heb. a strong adversative, **but in fact,** introducing the reality, as opposed to what has been wrongly expected

8 their doings. Therefore wait ye for me, saith the LORD,
until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my [a]determina-
tion is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the
kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all
my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with
9 the fire of my jealousy. [A] For then will I turn to the

[a] Heb. *judgement.*

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or imagined. Exactly so Ps. xxxi. 22^b, Jer. iii. 20 (RV. 'surely'), Is. xlix. 4^b (each time after *I said = I thought*), liii. 4 (RV. 'surely').

rose early and corrupted: i. e. corrupted actively and strenuously. This fig. sense of 'rose up' is otherwise found only in Jer., viz. vii. 13, 25, xi. 7, xxv. 3, 4, &c. (in all eleven times), and 2 Ch. xxxvi. 15 (a reminiscence from Jeremiah).

8–13. Let the faithful in Jerusalem, then, wait patiently, until the approaching judgement is completed (*v.* 8), when the 'remnant of Israel,' freed from all unworthy members, will cleave to God in sincerity of heart, and dwell in safety upon their own land.

8. wait ye (Is. viii. 17, lxiv. 4) **for me, . . . for the day when I,** &c. The faithful in Israel are addressed, as in ii. 3: they are to wait trustfully for the day when Yahweh's judgement upon the nations (i. 2 f.) is accomplished; for that judgement will sweep away the sinners and oppressors (*v.* 3) in Israel as well as in other nations, and so will issue in their own deliverance.

to the prey: i. e. for the destruction of the nations. LXX, Syr. read **as a witness** (*'ēd* for *'ad*), viz. against the nations (not as We., Now.); so Smith, Marti. Cf. for the figure Mic. i. 2; Mal. iii. 5. Halévy would read, 'until the day that I rise up *to set in order* my judgement, to gather the nations,' &c. (לערך for לעד כי).

to gather, &c. The picture is that of the nations assembled for judgement: cf. Jer. xxv. 31, 33, Is. lxvi. 16, Ez. xxxviii–xxxix, Joel iii. 11–16. Read then, *to assemble*, &c. (לקבץ for לקבצי).

for all the earth, &c. Repeated from i. 18.

9–10. The peoples will then unite harmoniously in the service of Yahweh. The connexion with *vv.* 1–8 must be admitted to be very imperfect. (1) The terms of *v.* 8 imply not purification, but destruction: if, however, all the nations are destroyed, how can any remain to be converted? (2) What does 'For' in *v.* 9 give a reason for? It might give a reason for God's purpose to purge or renovate the nations: but not for His purpose to *destroy* them (*v.* 8). Can it, then, give a reason for 'wait ye,' addressed to the pious in Israel, in *v.* 8 (so Keil)? It can only do this, if the conversion of the Gentiles anticipated in *v.* 9 be assumed to involve the destruction of evil-doers not only in the nations at

peoples a pure [a] language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one [b] consent.
From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia [c] my suppliants, even 10

[a] Heb. *lip.* [b] Heb. *shoulder.*

[c] Or, *shall they bring my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, for an offering unto me*

---

large (*v.* 8), but also in Israel itself (where they afflict and oppress the righteous, *v.* 3): yet if these links in the argument had been in the prophet's mind, would they not naturally have been expressed by him? Either, if *vv.* 9–10 are really Zephaniah's, the connexion of thought is imperfect, and we have, perhaps, his discourse in a condensed form, with links in the argument omitted; or the verses are an insertion made by a later hand.

9. turn. Cf. 1 S. x. 9.

a pure lip. 'Lip' may in Heb. stand for 'language' (see e.g. Gen. xi. 1 RVm., Is. xix. 18 Heb.); but it is better to take it here in its literal sense. The 'lips' of the nations are unclean, either from their general sinfulness (Is. vi. 5, cf. 7), or, more particularly, from their taking the names of false gods upon them (Hos. ii. 19, Ps. xvi. 4).

with one consent. Heb. *with one shoulder.* The metaphor does not occur elsewhere in the O. T., but is found in Syriac.

10. Ethiopia is again, as in ii. 12, taken as a type of a distant nation. The verse has, however, been very differently understood, the Heb. being in parts uncertain or ambiguous. (1) RV. Here 'daughter of my dispersed' is taken as a poetical expression, formed on the analogy of the 'daughter of Jerusalem,' *v.* 14, 'daughter of Babylon,' Ps. cxxxvii. 8, &c. (meaning the *community* or *people* of Zion, Babylon, &c.), and signifying the community of scattered Israelites; and the meaning is that the dispersed people of God would be brought back from their most distant places of banishment (cf. Is. xi. 11, xxvii. 13, &c.), and again bring Him offerings in Jerusalem. (2) RVm. The meaning of this is that the Gentiles would themselves bring back the dispersed Jews as an offering to Yahweh: for the thought in this case, cf. Is. lxvi. 20. As Davidson, however, remarks, the expression 'suppliants' seems then not very natural. (3) The word following 'daughter of' in the expressions mentioned under (1) is, however, elsewhere always,—or (see Mic. iv. 5) nearly always,—the name of a people; the word rendered *dispersed* is a peculiar one, which does not occur elsewhere; and hence Ewald conjectured 'the daughter of *Put*' (פוט for פוצי), the African people mentioned in Nah. iii. 9 in parallelism with Kush (Ethiopia); the verse would then describe the homage of the heathen, and be parallel in thought to Is. xviii. 7 (cf. also Is. xlv. 14; Ps. lxxii. 10). There

the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.
11 [*Z*] In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee [a] thy

[a] Or, *them that exult in thy majesty*

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is in the context no mention or thought of the restoration of the Jews, so that this last sense is decidedly the most appropriate; but it must remain an open question whether the subject, 'my suppliants (also a doubtful word, not found elsewhere), the daughter of Put,' expressing the heathen nations, really represents the original text of the passage.

the rivers of Ethiopia. So Is. xviii. 1. The Hebrews may have heard of the Blue Nile and the 'Aṭbara, which join the main stream from the S.E. at about 15° and 18° N., respectively.

bring. The word used means *to conduct*, *lead up*; and implies that the offering (or [collectively] offerings) was *led* or *brought up* in some state, accompanied by a procession: cf. (likewise of gifts or offerings) Ps. lxviii. 29, lxxvi. 11; Is. xviii. 7.

offering. Or, *present*, as token of allegiance (1 S. x. 27).

11–13. Then the purified remnant of Israel will cleave faithfully to its God, and trusting in Him will dwell unmolested in their own land. The picture is in designed contrast with the corrupt Jerusalem of the present, *vv.* 1–7.

11. In that day: i.e. in the general period spoken of in the context (Is. vii. 18, 20, and often); here of the period after the judgement (*v.* 8), when the prophet pictures the kingdom of God established in Judah.

not be ashamed, &c. Because viz. (Keil) such doings no longer occur, or (Ew., Dav.) because they are so completely passed away as to be no longer remembered. Or (Nowack, Marti), in accordance with a common use of the word, 'shalt thou not *be put to shame* on account of all thy doings,'—the actual offenders (*vv.* 3, 7 *end*) having been all cut off (*v.* 11^b 'for then I will take away,' &c.).

for then, &c. Zephaniah adopts here (cf. ii. 7, 9) Isaiah's characteristic doctrine of the purification of Judah by a judgement, sweeping away its unworthy members, and leaving only a righteous 'remnant' to escape, who will then be the founders of a new community, to be established in the future, endowed with the true, or ideal, perfections of the Israel of God (Is. i. 25–27, iv. 3, x. 22, xi. 11, 16, xxviii. 5, xxxvii. 22)[1].

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[1] See more fully the writer's *Isaiah, his Life and Times* (in the 'Men of the Bible' series), pp. 21 f., 26, 110.

proudly exulting ones, and thou shalt no more be
haughty in my holy mountain. But I will leave in the 12
midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall
trust in the name of the LORD. The remnant of Israel 13
shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a
deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall
feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

thy proudly exulting ones. The upper classes of Judah, confident in themselves, proud and elated. The same expression is used in Is. xiii. 3 of Yahweh's warriors, the Medes, elated with martial pride.

12. leave. Heb. *cause to remain over* (cognate with 'remnant,' *v.* 13).

an afflicted and poor people. Only these survive the judgement, to form the nucleus of the worthier community of the future. The 'remnant' is characterized by the qualities usually found in the pious servants of Yahweh. The godly men of Israel were found, as a rule, not among the nobles or the wealthy, who too often abused their position to defraud or oppress those lower in the social scale than themselves (see e. g. Ps. x. 2, 9), but among those who are described as the 'poor,' the 'needy,' or the 'afflicted'[1]. It is these, accordingly, who enjoy Yahweh's favour and regard: cf., for instance, Ps. xviii. 27, where He is spoken of as saving the 'afflicted people,' but as abasing the 'haughty eyes'; and such passages as Is. xiv. 30, 32, xxv. 4, xxix. 19; Ps. xii. 5, xxxv. 10.

trust. Properly, **take refuge in:** see on Nah. i. 7.

13. The remnant of Israel. See on *v.* 11; and cf. ii. 7, 9, Mic. ii. 12, v. 7, 8.

not do unrighteousness. As *v.* 5.

nor speak lies, &c. 'They will not deceive, or take advantage of one another, or embitter one another's life, but will lead together an idyllic existence of peace and tranquillity, none harming or disturbing another' (Hitz.). Contrast *v.* 3, and the picture in Jer. ix. 3–5.

feed, &c. Like a flock, grazing and lying down in complete security. For 'feed' and 'lie down' (fig.) cf. Is. xiv. 30, Mic. vii.

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[1] Or, the 'humbled.' The word is cognate to that rendered 'humble' in ii. 3; but, while that denotes those who voluntarily *humble themselves* under the hand of God, this denotes those who *are humbled* by human oppression, or other adversity. Cf. on Hab. iii. 14; and see, further, the art. 'POOR' in *DB*.

14 Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and
15 rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The
LORD hath taken away thy judgements, he hath cast out
thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the
16 midst of thee: thou shalt not [a]fear evil any more. In

[a] Another reading is, *see*.

14; for 'and none shall make them afraid'—a standing phrase to describe a condition of unmolested security—Is. xvii. 2, Mic. iv. 4, Job xi. 19.

14–20. Conclusion. In *vv.* 14–17 the prophet, with his eye fixed on this blissful future, in jubilant tones bids the people rejoice in the restoration of Yahweh's favourable presence in their midst; in *vv.* 18–20 Yahweh speaks, and promises that those now in exile will be brought back, and assume an honourable position among the nations of the earth.

14. Sing. As Is. xlix. 13, liv. 1. More exactly, **Ring out** (thy joy): see Cheyne, *The Psalms* (1888), on Ps. v. 12, or the writer's *Parallel Psalter*, p. 455.

O daughter of Zion. 'Daughter,' in such expressions, is a poetical personification of the population or community: it is particularly used where it is desired to portray the people as feeling or expressing some keen or vivid emotion: see e. g. Is. x. 30, xxxvii. 22; Jer. vi. 26; Zech. ii. 10, ix. 9.

15. hath taken away . . . hath cast out. 'Prophetic' perfects: the prophet transports himself in imagination into the time when the various judgements that have fallen upon Israel during her history are all past, and there is no longer any enemy to vex her.

thy judgements. We., Now., Marti, with a change of points, would render *thine opponents* (viz. in judgement: see Job ix. 15 Heb. [G.-K. § 55^b]). But it is perhaps doubtful whether a term having a forensic sense is suitable here to the context (Is. liv. 17 is different).

cast out. Rather, **cleared away**: see *Lex.* 815^b.

the king of Israel. So Is. xliv. 6; cf. *the king of Jacob*, xli. 21.

in the midst of thee. Protecting Israel; it being at the same time implied that Israel is worthy of His presence in its midst. Cf. Nu. xi. 20, xiv. 14; Is. xii. 6; Jer. xiv. 9; Joel ii. 27: also Ez. xlviii. 35.

fear. Marg. **see**, i. e. *experience*; cf. Jer. v. 12, and especially Ps. xc. 15. The two words differ in the Heb. very slightly, and are confused elsewhere (see Jer. xvii. 8 RV.). LXX, Pesh., express *see*, which is preferred generally by moderns.

that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: [a]O
Zion, let not thine hands be slack. The LORD thy God 17
is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save: he
will rejoice over thee with joy, he will [b]rest in his love,
he will joy over thee with singing. [A] [c]I will gather 18
them that [d]sorrow for the solemn assembly, who were of

[a] Or, and to *Zion* [b] Heb. *be silent.*

[c] Or, *They have been sorrowful for the solemn assembly which I took away from thee*, for *the lifting up of reproach against her*

[d] Or, *are removed from*

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16. Fear thou not. As Is. xli. 10, 13, 14, and often. The marg. (= AV.) is improbable, and may be neglected.

be slack. Properly, *hang down*, in want of energy, or terror. The expression is a common one: see e.g. Is. xiii. 7; 2 S. iv. 1, xvii. 2; and (with *let not*, as here) 2 Ch. xv. 7.

17. The verse repeats and expands the thought of *v.* 15. Yahweh is not only in Israel's midst: He is there also with His might, as its defender, and His love to it is restored.

a mighty one: i.e. a warrior (see on Nah. ii. 3); applied to Yahweh, as Jer. xx. 11, and especially Is. xlii. 13.

rejoice. A strong word, implying full and exuberant joy: of Yahweh, as Dt. xxviii. 63, xxx. 9; Jer. xxxii. 41; Is. lxii. 5, lxv. 19.

be silent in his love. The expression is interpreted to mean a 'silent ecstasy' of love; but such an idea agrees badly with the words following ('with ringing cries': see Cheyne on Ps. v. 12; or the writer's *Parallel Psalter*, p. 455). Buhl has suggested a slight but very plausible emendation, 'He will *renew* His love[1].'

18–20. Promise of restoration to those in exile.

18. The text must be rendered, **them that sorrow** (Lam. i. 4) **away from;** or (RVm.) **them that are removed** (2 S. xx. 13) **from:** in either case the allusion being to those exiled in foreign lands.

the solemn assembly. Heb. *mô'ēd*, meaning properly *a stated place* or *time*, and applied in particular to the fixed **sacred seasons** of the Jewish year: see especially Lev. xxiii, which is a calendar of such sacred seasons (RV. *set feasts*; RVm. *appointed seasons*): for other references, see Hos. ii. 11; Is. i. 14, xxxiii. 20 (EVV. *solemnities*); Ez. xliv. 24. In RV. the word is usually

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[1] יְחַדֵּשׁ for יַחֲרִשׁ: the *Piel* conjug. with ב (lit. *make newness*, or *act newly, with*), as Is. xxii. 4, Gen. xliv. 12.

thee: [a] *to whom* the burden upon [b] her was a reproach.
19 Behold, at that time I will deal with all them that afflict
thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her
that was driven away; and I will make them a praise and
20 a name, whose shame hath been in all the earth. At

[a] Or, *which hast borne the burden of reproach*

[b] According to some ancient authorities, *thee*.

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rendered in Lev., Nu., Chr., *set feast*, in the prophets *appointed feast* or *solemn assembly*,—'solemn' in this expression having not its modern sense, but the force of the Lat. *solemnis*, i. e. *stated*, *fixed*[1].

to whom **the burden upon her was a reproach.** Or, better, **upon whom** [fem., referring to *thee*, i. e. Jerusalem] **reproach was a burden,** i. e. upon whom there lay the heavy reproach of national disaster, and the exile of her children. RVm. is just a paraphrase of this rendering. For 'reproach,' cf. Isa. liv. 4 'the reproach of widowhood' (i. e. of the time of exile); Ez. xxxvi. 15 (with 'bear'); Ps. xliv. 13, lxxix. 4. The first RVm. on this verse may be disregarded. The Heb. of the verse is crabbed and strange; and, though it is translatable, it can hardly be throughout in its original form. Halévy would read, 'I will gather them that are removed from the solemn assembly, they shall be with thee (עמך for ממך), that thou bear not reproach because of them' (מִשְּׂאֵתֵךְ עֲלֵיהֶם for מַשְׂאֵת עָלֶיהָ). This is plausible, though whether it is the original text is more than we can say.

19. deal with. Cf. in the Heb. Ez. xx. 44, Ps. cix. 21 (in a good sense); and in a bad sense, as here, Ez. xxii. 14[2]. For the thought, cf. Is. li. 23.

that afflict thee: i. e. the heathen nations, Is. lx. 14.

her that halteth, &c. The people are spoken of under the figure of a flock, of which some are lame, and some have been driven away: cf. Mic. iv. 6, 7, Ez. xxxiv. 4, 16, Zech. xi. 16.

a praise and a name. Cf. Dt. xxvi. 19 RVm.

whose shame, &c. Viz. on account of their exile (cf. Ez. xxxvi. 15). But the clause is (in the Heb.) attached very awkwardly to the preceding one; and this rendering (as Dav. remarks) lays an unnatural emphasis upon the pron. *them*, which that time will I bring you in, and at that time will I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I bring again your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD.

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[1] 'Set (or 'appointed') feast,' the English reader should be aware, means in EVV. something quite different from 'feast.' 'Feast' (*ḥag*) denotes a *pilgrimage*, and there were only three of these in the Jewish year (Ex. xxiii. 14–17): 'set feast' (*mô'ēd*) is a wider term, and denotes any sacred season (Lev. xxiii).

[2] Where of course אוֹתָךְ is for אִתָּךְ: see *Lex.* pp. 85^b, 86^a.

(in the Heb.) instead of being the antecedent to *whose*, refers far more naturally back to the persons mentioned before. It is very probable that the last word in the Heb. ('their shame') is not original; and that we should read simply 'and I will make them a praise and a name in all the earth': cf. *v.* 20 'for I will make you,' &c. Or (Grätz, Halévy) תחת may have fallen out: 'and I will make them a praise and a name in all the earth *in return for* their shame': cf. Is. lxi. 7. The two Heb. words, however, drag a little, in this case, at the end of the verse.

20. and at that time will I gather you. A clause such as this suits the context excellently; but it cannot by any possibility be extracted from the existing Heb. text[1] (which is, in fact, untranslatable).

I will make you, &c. Cf. Jer. xxxiii. 9.

when I turn your captivity. As ii. 7.

before your eyes: i. e. so that you will witness and experience it yourselves; it will not be delayed till only your children can take part in it.

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[1] It implies ובעת ההיא אקבץ אתכם for ובעת קבצי אתכם.

HAGGAI

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

HAGGAI

INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF HAGGAI'S TIME; AND THE OCCASION AND CONTENTS OF HIS PROPHECY.

THE prophecies of Haggai are dated in the second year of Darius Hystaspis (B. C. 520), seventeen years after the return of the Jews from Babylonia in the first year of Cyrus (B. C. 537). Not, of course, that the whole body of exiles availed themselves of the permission granted by the edict of Cyrus (Ezr. i. 1–4) and returned to the home of their fathers. Many had, no doubt, followed the advice given by Jeremiah (Jer. xxix. 5–7) to the first band of exiles, who had gone into captivity with Jehoiachin in 597: they had built houses, planted gardens, and brought up families in Babylonia; they and their children had in many cases grown accustomed to their new home, and not even the inspiring utterances of the Second Isaiah had been sufficient to induce them to leave it. Nevertheless, according to the list in Ezr. ii. 1–70 (=Neh. vii. 6–69, with textual variations), 42,360 Israelites,—or (according to the separate items[1]) 29,818 (in Neh. 31,089) Israelites (including 4,289 priests, 74 Levites, 128 (148) singers, and 139 (138) gate-keepers),—besides 7,337 male and female slaves, and 200 singing men and women, formed the company which returned to Judah in 537. The bulk of the laity were naturally of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the only two secular tribes left in Palestine after the end of the Northern Kingdom in 722.

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[1] The sum total (in both Ezr. and Neh.) is considerably in excess of that obtained by adding together the numbers of the several items. The source of the discrepancy is uncertain.

The civil head of the restored community was Sheshbazzar (Ezr. i. 8, 11, v. 14, 16), of whom it is disputed whether he is identical with Zerubbabel or not: even, however, if (as most modern scholars hold[1]) he is not, Zerubbabel, the grandson of Jehoiachin, and therefore a prince of David's line, had taken his place as *peḥāh*, or governor, of the Persian province of Judah, and civil head of the Jewish community, before 520, the year in which Haggai and Zechariah began to prophesy (Ezr. v. 1; Hag. i. 1). The ecclesiastical head of the community was Jeshua, or Joshua, grandson of Seraiah, who was chief priest at the time of the destruction of the Temple in 586 (2 K. xxv. 18). The returned exiles settled partly in Jerusalem, partly in a number of towns and villages in the neighbourhood, such as Gibeon, Beth-lehem, Anathoth, Kiriath-jearim, Beth-el, &c. (Ezr. ii. 20 ff.).

The first public act of the restored community was the erection of the altar of burnt-offering upon its old site (Ezr. iii. 2 f.). This statement of the Book of Ezra is confirmed by the contemporary allusion in Hag. ii. 14; but with regard to the date of the foundation of the new Temple, a difficulty arises on account of the conflict of authorities. According to Ezr. iii. 8–13 this ceremony took place in the second year of the return (i.e. in 536); and with this statement agrees the representation of Ezr. iv. 1–5, 24[2], according to which the enemies of the Jews succeeded in interrupting the rebuilding of the Temple till the second year of Darius (B.C. 520); it is also supported by Ezr. v. 16, where the elders of the Jews, in reply to the letter sent to them in 520 by the Satrap Tattenai, asking what authority they had for building the Temple, after appealing to the permission granted by Cyrus to Sheshbazzar, proceed to state that Sheshbazzar 'laid the foundation of the temple, and since that time even until now it hath been in building, and yet it is not completed.' Of these passages Ezr. iii. 8–13 and iv. 1–5, 24 are plainly the work of the compiler of the Book of Ezra[1], i. e. of the Chronicler who lived some 250 years after B. C. 536, so that his statements have not the value of contemporary history. On the other hand, a number of mostly *contemporary* passages seem to imply that the foundation of the new Temple was not laid till the second year of Darius (B. C. 520): thus Hag. i. 4, 9 speaks of the Temple in that year as being still 'waste'; Ezr. v. 2 describes Zerubbabel and Jeshua as 'beginning' to build the house of God, with the encouragement of the prophets (i. e. Haggai and Zechariah; see Ezr. v. 1, vi. 14, as well as Hag. i. 14 f., Zech. iv. 7–9), not in 536 but in 520; Hag. ii. 18 can hardly be naturally understood except as dating its foundation in the same year[2]; and Zech. viii. 9,—written in, or after, Darius's fourth year, 518 (see vii. 1),—appears to state explicitly that its 'foundation was laid' at the same time (viz. when the same prophets were active, two years previously). Upon the strength of these latter passages it was argued by Schrader[3], Kuenen, and others, that the Chronicler, thinking naturally that the first care of the returned exiles would be to give effect to the permission granted by Cyrus, and begin the work of rebuilding the Temple, ante-dated its foundation by sixteen years, assigning to B. C. 536 what really did not take place till 520. In view of the frequently unhistorical statements and descriptions of the Chronicler, especially where religious ceremonies or institutions are concerned (e. g. in 1 Ch. xv–xvi and much of xxiii–xxix), there would certainly be nothing intrinsically improbable in such a supposition: but the terms of Ezr. v. 16 seem to be too explicit to admit of it[1]; and so the more probable view appears to be that the foundation was laid originally in 536, but that, as all attempts to carry the work further proved for the time abortive, either the ceremony was actually repeated when the work was resumed in earnest in 520[2], or at any rate that the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month in 520, when the work was so resumed, was treated as the day on which the foundation of the Temple was really and effectively laid, and Haggai and Zechariah ignored what took place in 536 altogether.

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[1] See art. 'SHESHBAZZAR' in *DB*.

[2] *Vv.* 6–23 relate both to a different (and later) occasion and to a different subject, viz. not the *Temple*, but the *city-walls*: see the Commentaries, or the writer's *Introd. to the Lit. of the OT.*, pp. 514 f. (ed. 7, pp. 547 f.).

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[1] See the writer's *Introduction*, p. 514 (ed. 7, p. 547).

[2] In the verse, 'Consider, I pray you, from this day onward: from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of Yahweh's temple was [*or* has been] laid, consider it,' the two clauses beginning with 'from' can hardly be anything but parallel, so that the 'day' on which the Temple was founded will be identical with the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, viz. (see *v.* 10) in Darius's second year, B. C. 520.

[3] In an essay written on the subject in 1867.

We may, then, picture the foundation-stone of the restored Temple as having been laid formally in 536. No further progress was, however, made for sixteen years. Various causes contributed to this inactivity. The fifty years of captivity had taught the exiles that it was possible to preserve at least the main principles of their religion without Temple or altar. The more zealous party would, no doubt, have made some effort to rebuild the Temple, and reorganize public worship upon its former footing, had not a series of untoward circumstances stood in the way. The half-caste Samaritans,—descendants partly of foreign colonists, partly of Israelites who had escaped the captivity of the Northern Kingdom (B. C. 722),—had begged to be allowed to help in the work of rebuilding the Temple; but their offer had been refused by the Jews,—partly, no doubt, upon religious grounds, but partly also, it is probable, from a fear of compromising their political independence, and forfeiting the privileges secured to them by the edict of Cyrus, if they formed alliances with their neighbours: and the effect of the refusal was that the Samaritans became the determined foes of the Jews, and, probably by misrepresentations to the local Persian authorities, succeeded in seriously impeding the further progress of the work (Ezr. iv. 1–5, 24[1]). The country was also insecure: according to Zech. viii. 10, before 520 'there was no safety to him that went out or came in because of the adversary,'—the reference being probably to raids made by the Samaritans or other neighbours, though troubles arising from the passage of Persian troops through Judah, when Cambyses invaded Egypt in 527, may also be included. Nor was this all. The land had lain neglected for fifty years, and it was a long and laborious task to bring it into proper cultivation again: a succession of bad seasons added to the difficulty; droughts prevailed; the scanty crops were blasted by mildew and beaten down by hail: a few indeed were prosperous enough to dwell in 'panelled' houses, but the people generally were impoverished and disappointed (Hag. i. 4, 6, 9–11, ii. 16, 17; cf. Zech. viii. 10). The Second Isaiah had portrayed dazzling visions of the restoration: a triumphal progress of the exiles returning through the desert; noble trees and cooling waters affording them refreshment by the way; Jerusalem resplendent with every glory; the people basking in peace and felicity; the nations of the earth envious of their happiness, and vying with one another in showing them honour and respect (Is. xli. 18 f., xlviii. 20 f., xlix. 10 f., 22 f., lii. 12, liv. 11 f., lv. 12 f., lx, lxi. 5 f., lxv. 17–25). The reality was a bitter disenchantment: the people were disheartened: they concluded that the wrath of God was not yet removed from them (Zech. i. 12), and that 'the time had not yet come for Yahweh's house to be built' (Hag. i. 2).

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[1] Schrader, arguing that if 'that time' in Ezr. v. 16 meant 536 the verse would directly contradict Ezr. iv. 16, concluded that it described what was done by Sheshbazzar in 520. This, however, is hardly likely,—and indeed, if Sheshbazzar be not Zerubbabel, impossible: the statement 'since that time,' &c., must be allowed to be an exaggeration, but it is to be explained, probably, partly by the fact that the work had been nominally in hand since 536, and partly by the evident desire of the elders to satisfy Tattenai that it had not been begun at their own initiative, but that it had the sanction of Cyrus, and was merely the continuation of what had been begun originally by Sheshbazzar sixteen years before (so Stade, *Gesch.*, ii. 123, Meyer, Bertholet, &c.).

[2] So Stade, Meyer, Bertholet; cf. G. A. Smith, pp. 217 f., Nowack (ed. 2), pp. 323, 328.

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[1] *Vv.* 6–23, as already remarked (p. 146 *n.*), have nothing to do with *vv.* 1–5, 24.

Meanwhile, important events were taking place in the Persian empire. After the death of Cambyses in 522, the Magian Gaumâta, who pretended to be Cambyses's brother Smerdis, usurped the throne, and held it for seven months. His murder by Darius Hystaspis and six others, and the elevation of Darius to the throne (Hdt. iii. 67–88), was the signal for the outbreak of great disturbances in the Persian empire. As we learn from the Behistun inscription, a series of pretenders arose in different parts of the empire, and many provinces revolted, which had all to be reconquered by Darius. First Susiana rebelled under one Atrina, who styled himself king there; then Babylon under Nidintubel, who claimed to be 'Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabuna'id,' and who is shown by contract-tablets to have reigned in Babylon from Oct. 521 till Aug. 520, when Darius defeated Nidintubel in front of Babylon, and, entering the city a few days afterwards, put him to death. Whilst he was in Babylon, Darius tells us, the provinces of Persia, Susiana, Media, Assyria, Armenia, Parthia, Margiana, Sattagydia, Sacia all revolted[1]. The revolt in Susiana was soon subdued, but the others were more serious, and were not suppressed without many months of hard fighting[2]. Altogether Darius enumerates (including

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[1] Behistun Inscr., col. i. par. 16—col. ii. par. 2.

[2] It is unnecessary to state particulars here: they are given

Gaumáta) nine pretenders, and says that it cost him nineteen battles to put them down. His authority was not finally established in his empire till the spring of 519.

News of these occurrences would naturally reach Jerusalem; and as in the past the prophets had often caught their inspiration from great movements around them, in which they traced the workings of Yahweh's hand, so, it can hardly be doubted, this shaking of nations in the East helped to awaken the spirit of prophecy in Haggai, and determine the direction of his thoughts. It was a shaking which, as he wrote in 520, seemed destined to spread; it seemed destined to embrace other nations, and to be likely before long to issue in that overthrow of heathen powers to which the older prophets had often looked forward as preceding the advent of the Messianic age. It was imperative, therefore, that Yahweh's Temple should be made ready for Him as speedily as possible: when this was done, the people would no longer have cause to complain of bad seasons and other disappointments: Yahweh's blessing would rest upon them (Hag. ii. 19); there would be a 'shaking' both of 'heaven and earth,' and of 'all nations': some would offer willingly of their costliest treasures to beautify the restored Temple; nations unfriendly to Yahweh and His people would be overthrown, and perish by internecine strife: the Messianic age of peace and felicity would thereupon begin in Judah, with an honourable place reserved in it for Zerubbabel (Hag. ii. 7, 9, 21–23). Haggai thus reaffirms the Messianic hope of the older prophets, in a form suggested by, and adapted to, the circumstances of the age in which he lived.

Of course Haggai, in his picture of the future kingdom of God, portrays, like the other prophets, an *ideal.* As he looks out into the future he idealizes it: he pictures

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at length by Darius in the same Inscr., col. ii. par. 3–col. iv. par. 4.

the restored Temple as the religious centre of the world (Is. ii. 2–4), nations coming in pilgrimage to it, delighting to honour it with their gifts, and so making it more glorious even than the Temple of Solomon. The vision has not been fulfilled (cf. p. 180), and of course can now never be fulfilled except in a spiritual sense. All nations may own one religion and one God; but the one Temple in which, when this consummation has arrived, they will offer their worship and their gifts can obviously be only a spiritual Temple.

Haggai's book consists of four distinct, though related, prophecies, all belonging to the second year of Darius, B.C. 520.

1. Chap. i. On the first day of the sixth month Haggai appeals publicly to the people no longer to postpone the work of rebuilding the Temple: their neglect was not due to want of means, for some, at any rate, had built panelled houses for themselves, and it had been followed by failure of crops and drought, indicative of the Divine displeasure: if they would regain Yahweh's favour, let them fetch timber from the mountains, and begin the work of restoration at once. His words produced such an effect upon those who heard them that, on the 24th of the same month, the people, headed by Zerubbabel, and the high priest Joshua, began the work.

2. Ch. ii. 1–9. On the 21st day of the seventh month the prophet addresses words of encouragement to those who felt disheartened as they gazed upon the ruined remains of Solomon's Temple, and wondered whether they could ever be restored to their former magnificence: the future glory of the Temple, he declares, will exceed its former glory; for soon a great 'shaking' of all things will take place; the Messianic age will be established; and the Temple will be beautified by the offerings of the Gentiles.

3. Ch. ii. 10–19. On the 24th day of the ninth month, Haggai, in order further to impress upon the people the importance of pressing on with the restoration of the Temple,

teaches them, by means of a kind of parable, that so long as it remains unbuilt, a taint of guilt clings to everything that they do, and they cannot expect the unfruitful seasons to come to an end; if, however, they will only continue the good work which they have on this very day begun, they may confidently look forward to receive Yahweh's blessing.

4. Ch. ii. 20–23. An encouragement addressed, on the same day, to Zerubbabel personally, as the representative of the Davidic dynasty, and therefore the object of patriotic hopes. Zerubbabel is assured by the prophet that, in the approaching overthrow of heathen powers, his position will remain unshaken, and he will be made Yahweh's honoured and trusted vice-gerent.

The literary style of Haggai, though not devoid of force, is, comparatively speaking, simple and inornate: he lacks the imagination and poetical power possessed by the prophets generally. But he possesses all the feeling and spirit of a prophet; and his ministry was rewarded with a success which was denied to some of his greater predecessors. Times had changed: and though he had to arouse the people to exertion on God's behalf, he had not, like most of the pre-exilic prophets, to call them to repentance, or to threaten them with judgement for their idolatry and other national sins. 'In his opening message Haggai evinced the first indispensable power of the prophet—to speak to the situation of the moment, and to succeed in getting men to take up the duty at their feet; in another message he announced a great ethical principle[1]; in his last he conserved the Messianic traditions of his religion, and, though disappointed in the personality (Zerubbabel) to whom he looked for their fulfilment, he succeeded in passing on their hope undiminished to future ages' (G. A. Smith, p. 252).

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[1] Viz. (ii. 10–19) that evil has a greater infectious power than holiness.

HAGGAI

1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the

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1. the second year, &c. B. C. 520. See the Introduction.

Darius. Heb. *Daryāvesh*, which corresponds very closely to the form used by Darius himself in his inscriptions, *Dāryavush*. 'Darius,' comes, of course, through the Latin, from the Greek form of the name, Δαρεῖος. Darius Hystaspis (B. C. 522–485) is the Persian king of whom we hear much from Herodotus, and who led the expedition against Greece, which was repulsed by the Athenians at Marathon, B. C. 490.

Darius the king. The order usual in Aramaic, and found as a rule in the post-exilic books of the O. T. In the older books the order, almost without exception, is *the king David*, *the king Solomon*, &c.

the sixth month. The month called by the Assyrians and Babylonians *Elul* (Neh. vi. 15; 1 Macc. xiv. 27), corresponding to our Aug.-Sept.

the son of Shealtiel. Cf. Ezr. iii. 2, 8, v. 2; Neh. xii. 1; Mt. i. 12; Luke iii. 27. Shealtiel was son of Jeconiah (i. e. Jehoiachin), the king of Judah who (2 K. xxiv. 15) was taken captive to Babylon (1 Chr. iii. 17): Zerubbabel was consequently in the direct line of descent from David.

governor of Judah: i. e. governor of the Persian province of Judah. The word *peḥāh* is of Assyrian origin: it occurs constantly in the Ass. and Bab. inscriptions of the 'governor' of a province; and when the Persians succeeded to the empire of the Babylonians the name passed on to them. It often occurs in post-exilic writings in the same sense, as ii. 2, 21, Mal. i. 8, Neh. ii. 7, 9, &c.

Joshua. The first high-priest after the restoration, often mentioned in the Book of Haggai (see i. 12, 14, ii. 2, 4), and Zechariah (iii, vi. 11), called in Ezra (ii. 2, iii. 2 *al.*) and Nehemiah (xii. 1 *al.*) *Jeshua*. He was son of Jehozadak, the high-priest who was taken to Babylon by the Chaldaeans (1 Chr. vi. 15), and grandson of the high-priest Seraiah, who was put to death by

son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying, Thus speaketh 2
the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, [a] It is not
the time *for us* to come, the time for the LORD's house
to be built. Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai 3
the prophet, saying, Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell 4
in your cieled houses, while this house lieth waste? Now 5
therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts: [b] Consider your
ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, 6

[a] According to many ancient versions, *The time is not come for the LORD'S house &c.*

[b] Heb. *Set your heart on your ways.*

Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, after the capture of Jerusalem, B.C. 586 (2 K. xxv. 18–21).

2–6. The prophet, in Yahweh's name, rebukes the people: they have been remiss in making no effort to rebuild the Temple; hence their present distress and want.

2. This people. With a touch of depreciation, as Is. vi. 9, 10, xxviii. 11, 14 *al.*

The time is not come for Yahweh's house to be built. So we must read, following RVm.: the Hebrew text has a forced and unnatural construction. The people were disheartened: the glowing promises of the Second Isaiah had not been fulfilled; a succession of bad harvests (*vv.* 6, 11) seemed to indicate that Yahweh's anger still rested upon them. So they argued that the time had not yet arrived for the Temple to be built.

3. The prophet retorts the word they use upon themselves: is it, then, the 'time' for them to live in well-built, panelled houses?

in your cieled houses. More exactly, **in your houses,** (and that too) **panelled.** 'Cieled' is here a very misleading archaism (see W. A. Wright's *Bible Word-Book*, s. v., or Hastings' *DB.*, s. v.): for the word has no reference to what we now call the 'cieling,' but means *panelled*: the walls, viz. were wainscotted with costly woodwork (cf. Jer. xxii. 14). 'Cieled' has the same meaning in 2 Chr. iii. 5, Jer. xxii. 14, Ez. xli. 16 (AV. and RV.).

5. Consider. Heb. *set your heart on* (i. e. give your attention to): so *v.* 7, ii. 15, 18; also Job i. 8 *al.*

your ways: i. e. what you have been doing, and what it is leading to, viz. (*v.* 6) impoverishment and want.

6. The crops are scanty and poor, men are consequently insufficiently nourished, unable to resist the cold, and impoverished.

but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled
with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and
he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag
7 with holes. Thus saith the LORD of hosts: [a]Consider
8 your ways. Go up to the [b]mountain, and bring wood, and
build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will
9 be glorified, saith the LORD. Ye looked for much, and,
lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did
[c]blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because

[a] Heb. *Set your heart on your ways.*
[b] Or, *hill country*
[c] Or, *blow it away*

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but ye have not, &c. More exactly, **but ye cannot have enough; ye drink, but ye cannot be filled with drink; ye clothe you, but ye cannot get warm.**

he that earneth wages, &c. An expressive figure. Earnings quickly disappear: they are small in themselves, and are soon spent in providing the merest necessaries of life. Cf. Zech. viii. 10.

7, 8. The people are again bidden to 'consider their ways,' with the view of beginning to do now what they have so long neglected.

8. Go up to the hill country, &c.: i. e. into the mountainous country about Jerusalem, where there must at this time have been woods (cf. Neh. ii. 8, viii. 15). There would probably be almost sufficient stonework remaining from Solomon's Temple; but the woodwork had been burnt, and would have to be replaced.

be glorified: or, *glorify myself*, viz. by pouring out My blessing upon you, and bringing in the Messianic age.

9–11. The cause of the recent bad harvests and scarcity of food.

9. A double misfortune had fallen upon them. They had expected plentiful harvests, but had had scanty ones; and what they had gathered into the barns, being sickly or blighted, had quickly become spoilt.

blown (or **breathed**) **upon.** Either with the collateral idea (cf. RVm.) of *blowing away*, or (We., Marti), in accordance with a popular superstition, with that of spoiling: cf. the statement of a modern traveller, cited by Marti, 'The Muslims dislike it extremely, when any one breathes on a threshing-floor full of corn; they say that the devil then comes by night, and carries away a part of the harvest.'

Because, &c. The bad seasons, so far from being, as the

of mine house that lieth waste, while ye run every man to
his own house. Therefore [a] for your sake the heaven is 10
stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed *from* her fruit.
And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the 11
mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the wine, and
upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth

[a] Or, *over you*

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people thought (*v.* 2), an indication that the time for building the Temple had not yet arrived, are in fact a sign of Yahweh's displeasure for their slackness in the work, at the same time that they are ready enough to build and adorn their own houses (cf. *v.* 2).

run . . . to. Fig. for devote themselves eagerly to (cf. 'run to evil,' Pr. i. 16). But perhaps, with a slight change, we should read (We., Now., Marti), *take pleasure every man in.*

10. for your sake. The Heb. preposition is ambiguous, and might mean either *for your sake* (cf. Ps. xliv. 22), or *over you* (cf. Dt. xxviii. 23). In the former case, however, the words are superfluous after *Therefore*; and in the latter case the point would not have the full force that it has in Dt. xxviii. 23. LXX do not express the words; and it is possible that עליכם is due to a faulty repetition of the preceding על כן 'therefore' (so We., Now., Smith, Marti).

is stayed, &c. Read (omitting one letter): **hath withheld the dew, and the earth hath withheld her increase** (Zech. viii. 12). The Heb. verb is never used intransitively. Even RV. (= AV.) implies the addition of a letter: notice the italic *from.*

dew. Dew in Palestine is copious, as it is also indispensable for vegetation, during the hot and rainless summers: hence it is often mentioned as a condition of fertility, e. g. Dt. xxxiii. 13, 28, Zech. viii. 12.

11. A drought had fallen consequently upon the entire produce of the soil.

called. Cf. 2 K. viii. 1.

wine: rather, **must.** The Heb. *tîrôsh* appears to have been a comprehensive term, denoting sometimes (cf. Joel ii. 24) the freshly-expressed juice of the grape, sometimes (cf. Jud. ix. 13; Hos. iv. 11) a light kind of wine, such as the ancients often made by checking artificially the fermentation of the juice before it had run its full course (see more fully the note in the writer's *Joel and Amos*, in the *Cambridge Bible*, pp. 79 f.). 'Corn, must, and fresh oil' (*yiẓhār*) are often mentioned together as the three staple products of the soil of Palestine: e.g. Dt. vii. 13, xi. 14; Hos. ii. 8, 22: for *tîrôsh* cf. also Is. lxii. 8, lxv. 8; Zech. ix. 17.

forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

12 Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people did fear before the LORD.
13 Then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the
14 LORD. And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel

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labour: i.e. labour connected with agriculture; here of the *product* of labour, as Dt. xxviii. 33, Ps. lxxviii. 46.

'For ourselves, Haggai's appeal to the barren seasons, and poverty of the people, as proof of God's anger with their selfishness, must raise questions. But we have already seen, not only that national calamities were by the ancient world interpreted as the penal instruments of the Deity, but that all through history they have had a wonderful influence on the spirits of men, forcing them to search their own hearts, and to believe that Providence is conducted for other ends than our own physical prosperity' (G. A. Smith, ii. 239 f.; cf. i. 162 f.).

12–15. The effects of Haggai's prophecy. A little more than three weeks afterwards, the people, headed by Zerubbabel and the high-priest Joshua, began the work.

12. the remnant of the people: i.e. those who had returned from Babylon, the 'remnant' of a once more numerous nation. So *v.* 14, ii. 2; Zech. viii. 6: cf. Is. xlvi. 3.

obeyed. Lit. **hearkened to,**—which is, of course, the etymological meaning of 'obeyed' (*ob-audio*). So always.

did fear before Yahweh. Recognizing His hand in the bad seasons that had befallen them, and accepting them as a punishment for their neglect of His house.

13. in Yahweh's message. Rather, **by Yahweh's messengership:** i.e. in virtue of his being commissioned by Yahweh as His prophet. The word 'messenger' (often in the common sense of the word, and also as = *angel*) is applied only here to a prophet.

I am with you. A word of encouragement and consolation: ii. 4^{b}, Gen. xxviii. 15; Ex. iii. 12; Jos. i. 5; Jer. i. 8, and frequently.

14. stirred up the spirit of . . . So Jer. li. 11; 1 Chr. v. 26; 2 Chr. xxi. 16, xxxvi. 22 (= Ezr. i. 1); Ezr. i. 5.

the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their
God, in the four and twentieth day of the month, in the 15
sixth *month*, in the second year of Darius the king.

In the seventh *month*, in the one and twentieth *day* of 2
the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the
prophet, saying, Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of 2
Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of

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and they came, &c. Cf. for the fact Ezr. v. 2.

did work. As 2 K. xii. 11. 'Work' is a substantive. As the actual building seems only to have begun later (see on ii. 15–19), the reference will probably be to the preliminary labour of clearing away rubbish, &c.

ii. 1–9. Those among the people who remembered what the Temple of Solomon was like, before it had been pillaged, and its woodwork burnt, by the Chaldaeans (2 K. xxv. 9, 13–17), were no doubt greatly discouraged when they saw its dismantled walls and ruined courts, which had now lain neglected for more than sixty years, and wondered whether it would ever be possible to restore them to their former magnificence: whatever had been done during the past month (i. 15), the Temple in its present condition presented a disheartening spectacle. It was to counteract such despondency that Haggai spoke the words of encouragement contained in ii. 1–9, promising that, in spite of its present unworthy appearance, the later glory of the Temple would transcend its former glory, for the Messianic age is speedily approaching: the ideals of prophecy (e.g. Is. lx) will be shortly fulfilled; and the Temple will be beautified with the wealth of the nations (Is. lx. 5, 7, 13).

The Temple was actually completed four years afterwards, in 516 (Ezr. vi. 15). Its completion 'marks a new stage in religious history. It was the first and most definite step towards the realization of Ezekiel's vision of a holy community having the sanctuary as its visible centre and rallying-point. That Haggai connected the advent of the Messianic age with Zerubbabel is an instance of the inevitable limitations of prophecy. But he at least succeeded (G. A. Smith, ii. 252) in "asserting the Messianic hope of Israel, always baffled, never quenched, in this reopening of her life"' (Ottley, *Religion of Israel*, 1905, p. 128).

2. Zerubbabel, &c. See on i. 1.

Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the
3 people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house
in its former glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not
4 in your eyes as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of
Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people
of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with
5 you, saith the LORD of hosts, [a] *according to* the word
that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt,

[a] Or, Remember *the word, &c.*

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the remnant of the people. See on i. 12.

3. Who is left, &c. Solomon's Temple was burnt by the Chaldaeans sixty-six years before (B. C. 586); so that none but a few very aged men could have remembered it.

this house: the dismantled walls of Solomon's Temple.

as nothing: i. e. in comparison with what it was in its glory, when it was not only panelled on its inner walls with cedar, and decorated with carvings, but also,—even though there may be some exaggeration in the descriptions [1],—in many parts overlaid with gold.

4. be strong: i. e. *be of good courage*, as 2 S. x. 12 *al.* (Heb.).

for I am with you. Cf. i. 13.

5. The Hebrew is highly anomalous: 'the word' is preceded by the mark of the accusative, and there is no verb to govern it; the insertion of 'according to' in AV., RV. is utterly ungrammatical. If we understand 'Remember' (RVm.; cf. Zech. vii. 7), the reference will be to Yahweh's promise or covenant that, if Israel would be obedient to His voice, He would make it His possession out of all peoples (Ex. xix. 5; cf. Jer. xi. 3-5). But to understand 'Remember' is more than is possible. It seems that we must, with We., Now., Smith, Marti, follow the LXX, which does not express the first clause of *v.* 5 at all, reading (*v.* 4^b) 'for I am with you, saith Yahweh of hosts, and my spirit abideth in your midst: fear ye not.' This yields an excellent sense, in agreement with the context: the omitted words, on the contrary, introduce a thought foreign to their context, and are apparently a gloss, intended to remind the reader of the covenant made with Israel at the Exodus, as forming the basis of all Yahweh's subsequent relations with His people.

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[1] See *DB.* iv. 701^a; *EB.* 'TEMPLE,' § 9; Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew text of Kings*, pp. 73 f. (with reserve).

and my spirit [a]abode among you: fear ye not. For 6
thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet once, it is a little
while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and

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[a] Or, *abideth*

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abode. RVm. **abideth** is much preferable. It is the presence of Yahweh's spirit in Israel *now* (Zech. iv. 6), not in the past (Is. lxiii. 11), to which Haggai appeals.

6-9. The promise itself, giving the grounds of the encouragement expressed in *vv.* 4, 5. In the first two years of Darius' reign (522-520) his empire was in a disturbed state; many important provinces revolted under pretenders, and were with difficulty reduced to submission (see p. 150); and as in the past movements among the nations, or approaching political crises, taken in conjunction with their bearing upon Israel, had often given the impulse to prophecy, and determined the form and imagery of prophetic utterances, so now Haggai throws his prophetic thought into a form suggested by the circumstances of his time: he announces the signs that are to precede the advent of the ideal kingdom of God: nations will be shaken, and earthly kingdoms overthrown (cf. especially ii. 21-23); and then, as God's kingdom is established upon Zion, the peoples of the earth will vie with one another in bringing their costliest offerings to beautify His Temple (cf. Is. lx. 5-7, 11).

6. a little while. The future, as often in prophecy, is foreshortened. Isaiah, for example, anticipated the ideal kingdom of God as being established immediately after the overthrow of Sennacherib (Is. xi. 1-10, cf. x. 33 f.; xxxii. 1-8, cf. xxxi. 8-9); the Second Isaiah represents the ideal future as beginning immediately after the people's return from Babylon (e. g. Is. lx, lxi. 4-9); and here Haggai similarly pictures the Gentiles as coming to do homage at Jerusalem within 'a little while.' Cf. ii. 20-23, where Zerubbabel is assigned a place in the Messianic kingdom.

I will shake, &c. As ii. 21-3 shows, political convulsions are what the prophet has primarily in view; but he pictures them here as accompanied by earthquake, and other physical manifestations (cf. Is. xiii. 10, 13, as accompanying the fall of Babylon; Ez. xxxii. 7 f.).

This verse is quoted (partly) in Heb. xii. 26 f. The apostle finds an emphasis in the expression *Yet once*, implying the finality of the 'shaking' referred to by the prophet; and he interprets the passage as signifying 'the removal of the things that are being shaken, as of things that have been made' (i. e. of the earthly and transitory Jewish dispensation, then, as he wrote, on the point of passing away), 'that those things which are not shaken may remain' (i. e. the spiritual or Christian order of things, spoken

7 the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations,
and [a] the desirable things of all nations shall come, and
I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.
8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD
9 of hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater

[a] Or, *the things desired* (Heb. *desire*) *of all nations shall come*

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of in the next verse as a 'kingdom which cannot be shaken,' which he and those whom he is addressing have received).

7. The effects of this 'shaking' upon the nations.

the desirable things of all nations shall come, &c.: i. e. their costly treasures will be brought to beautify the Temple (cf. *v.* 8). The thought is exactly the same as that of Is. lx. 5, where, speaking of the Temple to be built in the restored city, the prophet says, 'The abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee, *the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee*' (cf. also *vv.* 6, 7 [RVm.], 11, 13). For the word rendered *desirable* (i. e. *precious*) *things*, cf. another derivative of the same root rendered 'precious' in 2 Chr. xx. 25, Dan. xi. 43. And for Zion, as the future spiritual metropolis of the world, cf. Is. ii. 2–4, Zech. viii. 21 f., xiv. 16.

The passage is, of course, 'Messianic' in the broader sense of the term; but the old rendering (Vulg. *et veniet desideratus cunctis gentibus*: AV. *and the desire of all nations shall come*), according to which it had specifically a personal reference, and spoke of the coming of the Messiah, is impossible upon grammatical grounds: the verb 'shall come' is in the Hebrew *plural*, showing that the subject *ḥemdath*, though in form a fem. sing., is really a collective term, and denotes 'desirable *things*': see in the Heb. exactly similar constructions in Jud. ix. 55, xv. 10; Is. xvi. 4; Ps. ix. 7, &c., and as here, with a *fem.* subject, Is. xxvi. 19; Ps. cxix. 103 (cf. G.-K. § $145^{c,d}$). The LXX already render correctly *καὶ ἥξει τὰ ἐκλεκτὰ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν.*

I will fill this house with glory. It is tempting to think (with some older commentators and Wellh.) of 1 K. viii. 10 f., and to refer the words to the glory of the Divine presence; but the context (*v.* 8, as well as *v.* 7^{a}) rather strongly supports the view that the 'glory' pictured by the prophet is that which will accrue to it from the offerings of the nations (cf. Is. lx. 5–7, 13).

8. The silver is mine, &c. The 'wealth of the nations' is Mine; and they will offer to Me of it willingly and abundantly.

9. The latter glory of this house: as the walls built by Solomon were probably, at least in part, still standing, the 'house,' or Temple, of which they were to form part, is regarded as one and the same as the previous one; cf. the same expression in *v.* 3. The latter glory of the Temple will be greater even than the than the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

In the four and twentieth *day* of the ninth *month*, in 10
the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD
by Haggai the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of 11
hosts: Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If 12
one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with
his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any

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former (*v.* 3), on account, viz. of the splendid offerings of gold and silver made to it by the nations. Cf. Tobit xiv. 5.

will I give peace. The final blessing. Though the nations may be in commotion (*vv.* 6^b, 7^a), Jerusalem will enjoy God-given peace (cf. Is. lx. 18). Between this prophecy and the next (*vv.* 10–19), spoken two months afterwards, falls chronologically Zech. i. 1–6 (in the *eighth* month of Darius' second year).

10–19. Haggai here adopts another means of encouraging the people to proceed with the work of rebuilding the Temple, by pointing to the consequences which their remissness in the past had brought upon them, and promising that henceforth the blessing of Yahweh should rest upon them. On the 24th of the ninth month—three months after work had begun on the site of the Temple (i. 14 f.), and two months after the last prophecy (ii. 1–9)—by means of replies elicited from the priests on two points of ceremonial observance, he teaches the people that, so long as the Temple remains unbuilt, they are as men that are unclean; their offerings are unacceptable; and hence the late unfruitful seasons. From the present day, however, the day on which the foundation of the Temple was laid, Yahweh promises to bless them.

11. Render: **Ask, now, direction of the priests.** The Heb. *tôrah* (from *hôrāh*, to *point out*, *direct*, *teach*) means *oral direction* given by the priests to the laity, in accordance with a traditional body of principles and usages, on (principally) points of ceremonial duty: in process of time the term came further to denote a *body of technical direction* (or 'law') on a given subject (e.g. on leprosy, Lev. xiv. 2, 32, 54, 57), and finally to denote 'the law,' as a whole. Cf. Jer. xviii. 18 '*direction* will not perish from his mouth'; Ez. xliv. 23 (cf. Lev. x. 10, xi. 47) 'They shall *direct* my people (so as to discern) between the holy and the common, and make them to know (the difference) between the unclean and the clean'; Dt. xxiv. 8; and see further the art. 'Law' in *DB.* (iii. 65).

12. holy flesh. The flesh of a sacrifice, which is sacred as belonging to Yahweh: so Jer. xi. 15 (RVm.).

meat, shall it become holy? And the priests answered
13 and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean
by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean?
And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.
14 Then answered Haggai and said, So is this people, and
so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is
every work of their hands; and that which they offer
15 there is unclean. And now, I pray you, consider from

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meat. Rather, **food:** see on Hab. i. 16.

shall. We should now say, **will.** So *v.* 13 (twice).

13. unclean by a dead body. Ceremonially 'unclean,' through contact with, or even proximity to, a corpse (Nu. xix).

it will be unclean. See Nu. xix. 22.

What was ceremonially 'holy' hallowed what it touched, but not more (Lev. vi. 27); what was ceremonially 'unclean' infected not only the person in contact with it, but whatever he touched as well (Nu. xix. 22): uncleanness had thus a greater infectious power than holiness. The application follows in *v.* 14.

14. So it is with the people: 'The faint aroma of sanctity, coming from their altar and sacrifices, was too indirect and feeble to affect and pervade the secular atmosphere of their life and circumstances—just as holy flesh carried in the lap will not sanctify what the lap touches; while, on the other hand, the work-a-day worldliness of their minds and life infected everything connected with them, defiling even their religious actions—just as one unclean from touching a corpse defiles even the holiest things when he comes near them' (Davidson, *The Exile and Restoration*, p. 82). The lesson is, Less worldliness, more holiness, more thought for God and His Temple.

there. A contemptuous reference to the provisional altar, which had been erected immediately after the return from Babylon (Ezr. iii. 3).

15–19. Let the people lay to heart their remissness in making no effort to rebuild the Temple during the seventeen years which had passed since their return from Babylon: a succession of infertile seasons had been the consequence of their neglect; only now, when they have seriously girded themselves to the work, can God promise them His blessing. This is clearly the general sense of the passage; but parts of it are difficult, and have been very differently understood. To the present writer the best rendering appears to be that of Nowack, which has been accepted by Wellh., in his third edition (1898), in preference to the one which he had this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon

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adopted previously[1]; and also by G. A. Cooke ('Haggai' in *DB.* ii. 280ᵇ *n.*), and Marti. It will probably conduce to clearness if the rendering of RV. (which is also that of Keil) is first explained, and then that of Nowack given as a whole, explanations of details being added afterwards.

(1) Explanation of RV.: Consider from this day and backwards, back from before one stone was laid upon another in the Temple (i.e. back from before the building of the Temple was resumed, three months ago, i. 14 f.); (*v.* 16 f.) during all this time there were bad seasons: (*v.* 18) consider from to-day and backwards, [beginning now at the other end] since the day when (sixteen years ago, Ezr. iii. 10) the foundation of the Temple was laid: (*v.* 19) Is the seed [which has been gathered] still in the barn? [No: the scanty produce has all been consumed,] yea, the vine, &c., have not brought forth (on account of the bad seasons): from this day (now that the work of rebuilding the Temple has begun in earnest) I will bless you.

Here (*a*) the day on which the foundation of the Temple was laid is taken to have been in the year after the return, sixteen years previously; (*b*) the interpretation of 'upward' as *backwards* is questionable; (*c*) in *v.* 18 the rendering 'since' (*lit.* 'from') implies a forced exegesis; the sudden transition from the end to the beginning of the sixteen years is awkward, and the same sense would have been more naturally expressed by 'from the day that the foundation of the Temple was laid until to-day, consider it' (cf. G. A. Smith, p. 248).

(2) As rendered by Nowack (except in one or two minor points): '[15] And now, I pray you, consider from to-day and onwards! Before a stone was laid upon a stone in the Temple of Yahweh [i. e. before to-day], [16] how did ye fare? when one came to a heap of twenty se'āhs, there were but ten; when one came to the wine-vat to draw off fifty trough-fulls, there were but twenty. [17] I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail, (even) all the work of your hands; yet were ye not (disposed) towards me, saith Yahweh. [18] Consider, I pray you, from to-day and onwards [resuming *v.* 15ᵃ]: (yea,) from the four and twentieth day of the ninth (month), from the day on which the foundation of Yahweh's Temple has been laid [i. e. from to-day], consider! [19] Is the seed [to be sown] still in the barn [viz. in the *future*, which the prophet here has in mind]? do the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree still [עֹד for עַד] not bear? [No: they will then bear; for prosperity will have returned]: from this day I will bless you!'

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[1] See for this Smith, pp. 247 f., who substantially follows it.

16 a stone in the temple of the LORD: [a] through all that time, when one came to an heap of twenty *measures*, there were but ten; when one came to the winefat for to

[a] Heb. *since those* days *were*.

Here the day on which the foundation of the Temple was laid is taken to be the day on which Haggai is speaking. The other variations from the sense expressed by RV. will be apparent from the translation: see also the following notes, and p. 170.

15. this day. The day on which the prophet is speaking, the 24th of the ninth month (Chislev [Zech. vii. 1] = Nov.-Dec.).

and upward. This is the crucial word in the interpretation of the passage. Everywhere else the expression means 'and *onwards*' (1 S. xvi. 13, xxx. 25; and in the formula, 'from [twenty] years old *and upwards*,' i. e. *and onwards*, Nu. i. 3, and often); and it is very doubtful whether, here and *v.* 18, it can be rightly understood in the opposite sense of *backwards*. Nowack understands the expression in the sense that we should expect it to have from the analogy of its other occurrences.

16. In consequence of the poor crops, both harvest and vintage had yielded much less than had been expected.

through all that time. Heb. *since they were*,—an incredible expression for 'through all that time.' The text is beyond question corrupt: the emendation of Matthes, **how did ye fare?** (*lit.* 'what did ye become?'), suggested by the LXX (τίνες ἦτε;), and adopted by Nowack, implies merely מה הייתם for מהיותם.

twenty measures. Read with LXX (*σάτα*) **twenty seahs**; the same word is also supplied by Rashi and Kimchi. The 'sĕ'āh' was the third of an ephah, and equal to about 2⅔ gallons: it is often in EVV. concealed under the colourless 'measure' (Gen. xviii. 6; 1 S. xxv. 18; 1 K. xviii. 32; 2 K. vii. 1; Mt. xiii. 33 [*σάτον*]).

winefat. 'Fat' is here an archaism for **vat** (Germ. *fass*, Icel. *fat*, A.-S. *fæt*), as elsewhere in EVV., viz. Joel ii. 24, iii. 13, Is. lxii. 2, Prov. iii. 10 RV., Is. v. 2 RVm., Mark xii. 1 AV., Hos. ix. 2 AVm. (cf. *Antony and Cleop.* ii. 7, 22, cited by Aldis Wright, *Bible Word-Book*, s.v. *Fat*). The 'wine-vat' was the receptacle in which the juice, trodden out by the feet of men in the 'wine-press,' was collected. Both were commonly cavities hewn out in the rock (cf. Is. v. 2) at different levels, the upper one, the *gath* or the wine-press, having the larger superficial area, the lower one, the *yeḳeb* or wine-vat, the greater depth; the juice expressed in the *gath* flowed down into the *yeḳeb* through a connecting channel. Many remains of ancient wine-presses and wine-vats have been found in Palestine: see Rob. *BR.* iii. 137 (here the *gath* was 8 ft. square and 15 inches deep, the *yeḳeb*

draw out fifty *vessels*, there were but twenty. I smote 17
you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all
the work of your hands; yet ye *turned* not to me, saith
the LORD. Consider, I pray you, from this day and 18

4 ft. square and 3 ft. deep), 381; *EB.* iv. 5312 (with a plan and sectional drawings).

to draw out. Rather, **to bale out,**—the word meaning *to scoop* or *ladle off* from the top; cf. Is. xxx. 14 'a potsherd . . . to *bale out* water from a cistern.' Indeed, this would be the only way in which a cavity sunk in the rock could be emptied.

fifty vessels. Heb. 'fifty *pūrāhs*' or *trough-fulls*,—'pūrāh' meaning a *wine-trough*, and being in Is. lxiii. 3 a syn. of the 'wine-*press*,' and so, it is supposed, signifying here the measure of juice which was generally obtained from one filling of the press with grapes. But the expression is rather strange; and perhaps, supposing a letter to have fallen out, we should read, with We. (and AV.!) 'to draw off fifty (seahs) *from the wine trough*,'—'*pūrāh*' being here in this case a synonym of the 'wine-*vat*.'

17. I smote you with blasting and with mildew. A reminiscence of Am. iv. 9; see also Dt. xxviii. 22, 1 K. viii. 37.

blasting: i. e. the blasting of the sirocco (cf. Gen. xli. 6, where the 'east wind,'—as indeed always in the OT.,—means the sirocco[1]), a hot and scorching wind which in Palestine is apt to blow up with great suddenness and violence from the desert, withering and burning the growing corn so that no animal will touch it, and described by travellers as striking the face like a blast from a furnace.

mildew: i. e. a blight causing the ears to turn a pale yellow, and yield no grain. The Heb. word signifies (pale and unhealthy) *greenness*.

and with hail, (even) **all the work of your hands:** i. e. your undertakings, especially your agricultural enterprises (cf. Dt. xvi. 15, xxviii. 12). For the destructive effects of hail, cf. Ex. ix. 25, 26, Ps. lxxviii. 47.

yet were ye not towards me: i. e. were not disposed towards me (2 K. vi. 11, Hos. iii. 3, Ez. xxxvi. 9 'I am towards you'). The Heb. here is peculiar: it is varied from 'yet ye returned not unto me' in Am. iv. 9 (also *vv.* 6, 8, 10, 11), just referred to. It is best explained philologically by Wellh. The correction ולא שבתם is violent.

18. See the alternative explanations of this verse above, p. 165. On the difficult question of the date of the foundation of the

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[1] 'Sirocco' is itself merely a corruption of the Arabic *sherḳiyeh*, 'eastern.'

upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth *month*, since the day that the foundation of the LORD's
19 temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree hath not brought forth; from this day will I bless *you*.

20 And the word of the LORD came the second time unto Haggai in the four and twentieth *day* of the month,
21 saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I
22 will shake the heavens and the earth: and I will over-

Second Temple, see p 147 f., where it is shown that, though there is some conflict of authorities, it is on the whole most probable that the ceremony did take place in 536, but, as it was not followed by any actual building operations till Haggai and Zechariah induced the people to proceed with the work in 520, it came to be ignored, and the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month in 520 was treated as the day on which the foundation of the Temple was really and effectively laid.

19. On the two different interpretations of which this verse (as far as 'brought forth') is susceptible, see also p. 165.

yea. The Heb. is unusual; but the rendering 'yea' or 'even' may be defended by 1 S. ii. 5, Job xxv. 5. Nowack's rendering 'still' implies only the change of a vowel point.

from this day I will bless you: now that the people have set themselves earnestly to the work of restoration, a blessing is promised.

20-23. Conclusion. A second prophecy, delivered on the same day as the last, and addressed specially to Zerubbabel, in which the prophet develops further the thoughts expressed by him two months previously (ii. 6 f.; see ii. 1); and promises Zerubbabel that on the approaching overthrow of the powers of the world, which is to inaugurate the Messianic age, his position will remain secure, and Yahweh will constitute him His trusted representative. The thought of the approaching downfall of the powers opposed to Israel appears also in Zechariah (see i. 15, 21, ii. 9, vi. 8): for the honour and distinction vouchsafed to Zerubbabel, see also Zech. iv. 7-10, and cf. on Zech. vi. 13.

21. governor of Judah. See on i. 1.

I will shake (Heb. **am shaking**) **the heavens and the earth.** As ii. 6. The participle, of the imminent future, as Nah. ii. 2.

22. The political aspect of the approaching crisis is developed here more fully and distinctly than in ii. 6 f.

throw the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the 23
LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

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the strength of the kingdoms: i. e. their chariots, horses, fortresses, and other military resources.

come down: i. e. *be struck down.* Cf. Is. xxxiv. 7; Jer. xlviii. 15, l. 27 (where 'come down' has the same meaning); Zech. xi. 2 *end.*

every one, &c. They will fall by one another's hands,—either through a panic seizing them or through quarrels breaking out among them. Cf. Jud. vii. 22; Ez. xxxviii. 21; Zech. xiv. 13.

23. The promise to Zerubbabel: Yahweh will make him His signet-ring, inseparable from Himself, and the symbol of His authority.

as a signet. The signet in the ancient East was a mark of honour and distinction, and was given by a monarch to an important minister, as a mark of confidence and authority (cf. Gen. xli. 42; Est. iii. 10). For the figure, as here used, cf. Jer. xxii. 24; and observe that the honourable position from which it is there said that Yahweh would degrade Jehoiachin is here conferred by Haggai upon his grandson (see on i. 1), Zerubbabel. The Messianic aspirations which attached formerly to the Davidic king are transferred by Haggai to Zerubbabel, who becomes, in virtue of the position thus assigned to him, a type of Christ.

I have chosen thee: viz. to be the Messianic ruler of the future: cf. Zech. vi. 9–13, with the notes.

chosen. As Saul or David, for instance, had been 'chosen' in the past, 1 S. x. 24, 1 K. viii. 16, xi. 34 *al.*

Additional Note on ii. 18.

It is no doubt strange to find the date specified in a prophecy delivered on the very day itself; and hence it is possible that the words 'from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month' in this verse are a gloss derived from *v.* 10. Wellh., Nowack, and Marti go further, and reject the following clause, 'since the day' &c., as well, regarding it also as a gloss, based upon an incorrect explanation of *v.* 15. But for this view there are no sufficient grounds: if the clause be omitted, not only is no date mentioned for the foundation of the Temple, but the stress laid upon 'this day' in *vv.* 15, 18, 19, as marking a change in Yahweh's attitude towards the people (*v.* 19[b]), remains unaccounted for.

ZECHARIAH

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Hag. i	Second year of Darius,	6th month.
Hag. ii. 1-9	,, ,, ,,	7th month.
Zech. i. 1-6	,, ,, ,,	8th month.
Hag. ii. 10-23	,, ,, ,,	9th month.
Zech. i. 7—vi. 15	,, ,, ,,	11th month.
Zech. vii-viii	Fourth year of Darius,	9th month.

ZECHARIAH I–VIII

INTRODUCTION

ZECHARIAH, son of Berechiah, and grandson of Iddo, of priestly descent (Neh. xii. 4, 16), prophesied, according to i. 1–7, and vii. 1, in the second and fourth years of Darius Hystaspis (B. C. 520 and 518). He was thus a contemporary of Haggai; and he is unquestionably identical with the Zechariah, son of Iddo, who is named in Ezr. v. 1, vi. 14 as co-operating with Haggai in his efforts to induce the people to prosecute the work of rebuilding the Temple.

The historical situation in 520 B. C. has been sufficiently described in the Introduction to Haggai. To recapitulate briefly what was there stated in greater detail: in the first year of Cyrus, B. C. 537, a large body of exiles returned from Babylon to Judah; they settled down in their old homes, but, partly from the difficulty of bringing the land again into cultivation, partly from a succession of bad seasons, and partly from troubles arising from their neighbours, the people fell into a state of apathy and despondency; and though the work of rebuilding the new Temple had been begun formally in 536, nothing further had been done to it till Haggai, two months before Zechariah's opening prophecy (i. 1–6), succeeded in stirring up the people to resume the work (Hag. i. 14, 15). A month later, Haggai had allayed the doubts of those who questioned whether the new Temple would ever be comparable to the old with the promise that the latter glory of the house should exceed its former glory, on account, viz., of the treasures which the nations would offer for its adornment (Hag. ii. 1–9). In the following month Zechariah begins to prophesy.

Zechariah's prophecies fall into three clearly-defined parts, which may be headed respectively: (1) A call to repentance (i. 1–6); (2) Visions of hope and encouragement for Judah (i. 7—vi. 15); (3) Yahweh's promises and demands for the future (chs. vii–viii).

I. i. 1–6 (eighth month of Darius' second year). A call to repentance, as the first condition of the return of Yahweh's favour, which the people thought had for ever left them.

II. i. 7—vi. 15 (three months later, and two months after Hag. ii. 10–23). Visions of hope and encouragement for Judah (i. 7—vi. 8), with a closely related historical appendix (vi. 9–15). This forms the central and most characteristic part of Zechariah's prophecy. The visions all centre upon the great questions of the day: what were the prospects of Judah for the future? how did she stand towards her heathen neighbours? would the Temple ever be finished? They form a well-arranged whole, showing how Yahweh's promises to His people will be fulfilled, and how the various obstacles, whether from without or within, which seem destined to thwart them, will one after another be removed. The answers given to these questions are not mere temporal promises: they all contain a large ideal or 'Messianic' element, which differs from the corresponding element in previous prophets only in being determined by, and accommodated to, the historical conditions of the time.

The *first* vision (i. 7–17). Yahweh's Four Horsemen. Yahweh's horsemen, who act as scouts or patrols, report that the earth is at rest: there is no sign of any movement among the nations, such as Haggai, a few months before (ii. 6 f., 21 f.), had declared would within 'a little while' bring in the Messianic age: but Yahweh assures the prophet that He is still, as of old, jealous for His people, and ere long Jerusalem and the cities of Judah will be rebuilt, and His people again be prosperous.

The *second* vision (i. 18–21). The Four Horns and the Four

Smiths. Four horns, symbolizing the nations opposed to Israel, have their power broken by four smiths.

The *third* vision (ii. 1–5). The Man with the Measuring-Line. The new Jerusalem is to have no walls; for its population is to be free to spread far and wide, and Yahweh will be its sufficient defence. In a lyric epilogue, attached to the vision (ii. 6–13), the prophet calls upon the Jews still in Babylon to hasten and return; for Yahweh is about to take up His abode in Zion, and many peoples will join themselves to Him.

The *fourth* vision (ch. iii). The High-Priest, Joshua, and the Satan. The calamities which continued to beset the people seemed to them an indication that there was still some sin clinging to them, which was an obstacle to their complete restoration to Yahweh's favour, and the advent of the promised future. By the vision of the high-priest, Joshua, representing the people, accused by the Satan, but acquitted, and clothed in clean garments, it is shown that this sin is done away with; and a promise is added of the speedy advent of the Messiah, and of the consummation of national felicity.

The *fifth* vision (ch. iv). The Seven-Branched Candlestick, and the Two Olive-Trees. Whatever the candlestick may be taken to signify (see the notes), this vision shows that the community presided over by Zerubbabel and Joshua is ever under the watchful care of Yahweh's eyes; and that Zerubbabel, in spite of difficulties, will successfully complete the building of the Temple.

The *sixth* vision (v. 1–4). The Flying Roll. The land to be purged of sinners. A roll, inscribed with curses, flies over the Holy Land, as a token that in future the curse for sin will never fail to light upon the sinner.

The *seventh* vision (v. 5–11). The Woman in the Barrel. The land to be purged of sin. Israel's sin, personified as a woman, is carried off in a barrel, and deposited in Babylonia, where for the future it is to remain.

The *eighth* vision (vi. 1–8). The Four Chariots. Four chariots, drawn by variously-coloured horses, go forth to execute God's judgements upon the heathen, in different parts of the earth, especially in Babylonia.

vi. 9–15. Historical Appendix. A crown to be made of the gold and silver which some of the exiles had sent as an offering to the Temple, and placed on the head of Zerubbabel[1], who is to complete the building of the Temple, and be the Messianic ruler of the future, with Joshua as priest at his side.

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[1] See the note on vi. 11.

III. Chs. vii–viii (two years afterwards, in Darius' fourth year, B. C. 518). Yahweh's promises, and moral demands, for the future. Zechariah, in answer to an inquiry addressed to him (vii. 1–3), declares that Yahweh demands no fasts, but only the observance of His moral commands, which their forefathers, to their cost, had neglected (vii. 4–14). And he ends his Book with a decalogue of promises (ch. viii), describing the happy days in store for Judah, if only it will satisfy Yahweh's moral demands.

The most characteristic feature of Zechariah's prophecies are the *visions*. The vision was a frequent mode of prophetic intuition in Israel (cf. Hos. xii. 10; Am. vii–ix; Is. vi; Jer. i, xxiv); but, in the prophecies which we still possess, it is most fully represented in the Books of Ezekiel and Zechariah. The vision is a projection or creation of the mind, analogous to the dream: the subject falls into a state of trance, or ecstasy, in which the channels connecting the brain with external objects are closed; the power of the will to guide thought is relaxed: on the other hand, the *imagination*, or faculty of combining images and ideas, which have been previously apprehended, into new forms, is abnormally active; and the pictures created by it stand out the more vividly, in the absence of the sharper impressions produced in a waking state of the senses. Psychologically the vision may thus be described as a combination into new forms, under the influence of some determining impulse, of the images and impressions with which the mind, through its waking experience, is stored. In a prophetic vision the determining impulse will have been due to the operation of the revealing Spirit: Zechariah, we may suppose, had been brooding over the condition and prospects of his people: the restoration of God's favour, the triumph over the heathen, the completion of the Temple, to be followed immediately by the advent of the Messianic age, the position to be taken in it by Joshua and Zerubbabel, and the felicity and sinlessness which would then be the nation's lot—these and kindred subjects had been long in his mind: he had, perhaps, thought of some of them in connexion with the same figures and imagery with which they appear associated in the visions; and the visions exhibit the shape which they ultimately took in his imagination. How some of the same subjects are treated by him without the concomitants of a vision may be seen in vi. 9–15, and in chs. vii–viii: the predominant ideas are still clearly the same.

It remains, however, a question whether in the case of Zechariah, whose visions in some cases are much more circumstantial than those of the earlier prophets, we have throughout the narration of actual visions, and not rather (G. A. Smith, p. 274) 'a series of conscious and artistic allegories—the deliberate translation into a carefully constructed symbolism of the Divine truths with which the prophet was entrusted by his God.' At least in part, the visions may well be not more than literary forms. And if we ask further why a man 'with such gifts of direct speech, such a keen desire to stir the public conscience' (see i. 2–6, vii–viii), and 'such clear views of his people's character and history,' should choose to express the latter by an imagery so artificial and involved, we may perhaps answer with the same writer that this, if partly a result of the natural bent of the prophet's mind, was partly also a result of the circumstances of his time: 'the exiles were not responsible citizens or statesmen, but dreamers. They were inspired by mighty hopes for the future, and not fettered by the practical necessities of a definite historical situation upon which these hopes had to be immediately realized.' They consequently gave the reins to their imagination, and threw the truths which they were inspired to discern into symbolic pictures carefully elaborated in all their details.

A standing feature in Zechariah's visions is the presence in them of *angels*. In the visions of the earlier prophets

(Am. vii–ix; Jer. i, xxiv) angels do not appear; whatever is said or done, Yahweh Himself is the speaker or doer; the only exceptions being 1 K. xxii. 19 ff., and Is. vi, where, in the representation of Yahweh's celestial court, angelic beings are naturally present. But in Ezekiel's visions angels, there regularly called 'men,' are a frequent feature: some execute Yahweh's judgement upon Jerusalem (Ez. ix. 1—x. 6); and another, in Ezekiel's vision of the restored Temple (Ez. xl–xlviii), conducts the prophet through the different parts, measures them, and explains the details to him (Ez. xl. 3, 4, 5, &c.). In Zechariah's visions angels are a constant feature: Zechariah never sees Yahweh, or is spoken to by Him directly. And so in his book we have the 'man that talked with me,' the interpreting angel who explains the visions to the prophet (i. 13, 14, 19, ii. 3, iv. 1, 4, 5, v. [2, 3,] 10, vi. 4), and we have besides the 'man' riding the red horse in i. 8, 'another angel' in ii. 3, and 'Yahweh's angel' himself in i. 11, 12, iii. 1, 2 [see note], 3, 5, 6. This predominance of angels in the visions of Ezekiel and Zechariah is due, probably, to a changed conception of the method by which Yahweh operated in the world. The earlier prophets had such a vivid sense of Yahweh's personal and practical interest in the affairs of His people that they were conscious of no need for the intermediate agency of angels: but with Ezekiel there arose an increased sense of the loftiness of God, and of the distance separating Him from earth; and so in Zech. iii, for instance, when Joshua and the Satan appear before the Divine tribunal, judgement is given by 'the angel of Yahweh,' who, as in the older historical books, 'though distinct from Yahweh, yet represents Him so directly and fully that when he speaks or acts Yahweh Himself is felt to speak or act'[1]: elsewhere, if the material details of a vision have to be explained, this is done by a 'man,' i. e. by an angelic being, acting on Yahweh's behalf, but of a decidedly lower rank than 'the angel of Yahweh,' and by no means representing Him with the same fullness or authority[1]. On the 'Satan,' see on iii. 1.

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[1] W. R. Smith, art. 'Angel' in the *Encycl. Britannica*. Cf. A. B. Davidson, art. 'Angel' in *DB.*, p. 94^{b}.

Of Zechariah's eight visions, three, the first two (i. 7–17, 18–21) and the last (vi. 1–8), deal with the relation of Israel to the heathen world without. In his method of dealing with this relation we observe a further difference between Zechariah and the older prophets. The older prophets,—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, for instance,—have always in view the actual nations, the Assyrians or the Chaldaeans, as the case may be, who are threatening Israel at the time when they are writing: Zechariah, developing a line of treatment which had begun with Zephaniah and Ezekiel (chs. xxxviii–xxxix), deals with heathen powers in the abstract: their overthrow is predicted; but what powers are intended, and by what historical movements they are to be destroyed, does not appear: the prophet employs indefinite symbolical or apocalyptic representations,—angelic horsemen patrolling the earth in i. 8–11, 'horns' and 'smiths' in i. 18–21, and 'chariots' carrying God's wrath into different quarters of the earth in vi. 1–8. This, again, is a peculiarity connected with the same absence of a definite political situation remarked upon above. It was necessary to assure the people that Israel, and the kingdom of God which it represented, would not succumb before the powers of the world: but there being no dangers actually threatening it, Zechariah conveys this assurance through symbolical representations of the means employed by God for its protection. In the peculiar character of their symbolism the visions of Zechariah prepare the way for the symbolical representations of the later Apocalypses, Daniel, Enoch, 2 Esdras, &c.

The remaining five visions (chaps. ii–v) deal with the future of Israel itself as a nation. Zechariah, as we have seen, was of priestly descent; and this no doubt accounts to a certain extent for the prominence which the Temple, and the high-priest, assume in his outlook into the future. But the completion of the Temple was the pressing question of the day: Ezekiel had seen in vision (x. 18 f., xi. 23), shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, Yahweh leave the Temple; he had afterwards (chaps. xl ff.) made elaborate provision for its restoration, and had also in vision seen Yahweh solemnly re-enter it (xliii. 4, 5). Without a Temple God could not dwell in the midst of His people, and the national restoration was incomplete. Haggai and Zechariah both urged upon the people the duty of hastening on the restoration of the Temple. To its completion they attached, as other prophets had done to the great coming events of their day, ideal hopes. Isaiah, for instance, had pictured the golden reign of righteousness and peace as beginning immediately after the downfall of the Assyrian (cf. on Hag. ii. 6); and so Zechariah, idealizing similarly the approaching future, pictures the completion of the Temple as inaugurating the same ideal age, when Judah and its inhabitants, with Yahweh again dwelling in their midst (ii. 10–12), will be prosperous and happy (ii. 4, 5, iii. 10), no longer assailed by foes (ii. 8, 9, and elsewhere), purged of sinners (v. 1–4), and sin (iii. 9, v. 5–11; cf. Is. i. 26, iv. 3, xxix. 20–24, xxxiii. 24), ruled by their ideal king,—whom Zechariah, as can scarcely be doubted (see on iii. 8, vi. 11), conceives as represented by Zerubbabel,—with Joshua as priest at his side (vi. 13), maintaining faithfully the ritual observances of the Temple (iii. 7), and when 'many nations' (as Isaiah also had foretold, ii. 2, 3, and elsewhere) will press forward, eager to share the same spiritual privileges, and 'join themselves' to Yahweh (ii. 11). Many of the same thoughts of Israel's felicity, in the coming Messianic age, recur in chap. viii (*vv.* 3–8, 12–13, 15; also, *vv.* 20–3, the adhesion of foreign nations). Like Isaiah, Zechariah was disappointed: the completion of the Temple was not followed by an age of ideal happiness and goodness: nevertheless, his visions remain as ideals of the goal designed by God for man, and of the goal to which, we may hope, human history is, if slowly, advancing. The Messianic expectations attached to Zerubbabel were naturally fulfilled, in a larger sense, by Christ. Zechariah was not, like the older prophets, called upon to rebuke: he nowhere, for instance, refers to idolatry: his task was to reassure and encourage his people at a time when despondency and depression had taken possession of them (p. 150). Nevertheless he opens his prophecy with a call to repentance (i. 2–6); and in chs. vii and viii he appears as a true heir of the older prophets, insisting upon the moral demands of righteousness and mercy which Yahweh made of His people, and which, he declares, are the condition upon which alone His bright promises for the future can be fulfilled. Zechariah thus teaches, more distinctly, perhaps, than any other prophet, how only man's co-operation, responding to the promptings of the Spirit of God, can ever bring in the golden age upon earth.

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[1] See further G. A. Smith's chapter on 'The Angels of the Visions,' p. 310 ff.

For the Introduction to chaps. ix–xiv, see p. 227 ff.

ZECHARIAH

1 In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius,
came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah the son of
2 Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet, saying, The
Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers.
3 Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord
of hosts: Return unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and
4 I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. Be ye
not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets cried,

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1. The second year of Darius was B.C. 520. The day of the month (cf. *v.* 7) has probably fallen out accidentally.

son of Iddo. See Neh. xii. 4, 16, from which it appears that Zechariah was of a priestly family (cf. p. 179).

Part I (i. 2–6).

A call to repentance.

2–6. A call to repentance, as the condition of the return of Yahweh's favour. The call is founded upon the experience of the past: the pre-exilic Israelites had turned a deaf ear to the warnings of the prophets, and Yahweh's judgements had overtaken them: let those whom the prophet now addresses take a lesson from their example.

2. with your fathers: who, viz. (*v.* 4), turned not at my rebuke: if, therefore (*v.* 3), you wish me to deal differently with you, act yourselves differently from them; *return unto me, and I will return unto you.*

3. Return, &c. This is what had been taught in substance by many previous prophets (e. g. Hos. xiv. 2–4; Is. i. 19; Jer. iii. 12–15, xxix. 12–14); but the *form* occurs here for the first time. Cf. Mal. iii. 7; 2 Chr. xxx. 6; also Jas. iv. 8.

4. the former prophets: i. e. the pre-exilic prophets; cf. vii. 7, 12. As Wellh. has remarked, the expression shows how deeply the Jews of the restoration felt the gulf which separated them from pre-exilic Israel.

saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Return ye now
from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but
they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord.
Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they 5
live for ever? But my words and my statutes, which I 6
commanded my servants the prophets, did they not
overtake your fathers? and they turned and said, Like
as the Lord of hosts thought to do unto us, according
to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he
dealt with us.

Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh 7

Return ye, &c. Into these words Zechariah casts the quintessence of the teaching of the pre-exilic prophets: man's repentance is the condition of God's assistance. The phraseology is modelled upon that of Jeremiah: see esp. Jer. xxv. 5; cf. also xviii. 11, xxiii. 22^b, xxxv. 15.

now: the enclitic 'now' (נא), better rendered, **I pray you.**

but they hearkened not. Cf. Jer. vii. 24, xxix. 19, xxxv. 16, 17, &c.

nor attended unto me. Cf. Jer. vi. 10, 17, 19, xviii. 18 (Heb.).

5, 6. An objection met. The people are supposed to argue that the fathers are long dead, and what have the former prophets to do with the present generation? Zechariah replies: It is true, your fathers and the prophets belong to the past; but (*v.* 6) not so my words: your fathers were obliged to own that they were fulfilled in their case; and unless you repent, they will be fulfilled again in yours.

5. where are they? The word 'they' is emphatic.

6. my statutes, &c. Rather, **my decrees** (viz. of judgement) **with which I commissioned,** &c.

my servants the prophets. So first in Am. iii. 7; most frequently in Jeremiah (six times), and the compiler of Kings (five times).

overtake. Cf. Dt. xxviii. 15, 45.

and they turned. Viz. not at the warning, but at the judgement, which forced them, when it was too late, to acknowledge the truth of what the prophets had said.

thought . . . dealt. So Lam. ii. 17^a (Heb.).

Part II (i. 7—vi. 15).

Visions of hope and encouragement for Judah.

7-17. *Zechariah's first vision.* Yahweh's Four Horsemen. On the circumstances in which the people now found themselves, and

month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet,
8 saying, I saw in the night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the [a] bottom; and behind him there were

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[a] Or, *shady place*

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the direction which they may be supposed to have given to the prophet's thoughts and feelings, which formed, no doubt, the human occasion of these visions, see the Introduction, p. 176f.

The object of the first vision is to show how, in spite of appearances to the contrary, God's anger with His people is at an end, and that ere long they will be in possession of every prosperity. The prophet finds himself in imagination in one of the myrtle-covered glens near Jerusalem: he sees what is in appearance a body of horsemen,—a reflection, perhaps, of the military bands and patrols of the Persians. The leader of the party is in front, the others are behind. It soon appears, however, that they are not in reality Persians; they are angelic beings, scouts of God, who have come in from patrolling the earth, bringing their reports with them. The whole earth, they declare, is at rest: there is no sign of any movement upon it, such as Haggai, only a few months before, had foretold was in 'a little while' to overthrow the powers of the heathen (Hag. ii. 6, 7, 20-22), and bring in for Israel the Messianic age. The angel who is speaking with the prophet thereupon inquires how much longer Jerusalem is to rest under the Divine displeasure, and is assured in reply that Yahweh's wrath now at last is turned to pity: Jerusalem and the Temple will ere long be rebuilt, and the prosperity of His people will be no longer delayed.

7. the four and twentieth day, &c. Three months since Zechariah had come forward with his call to repentance (i. 1-6), and exactly two months since Haggai's encouraging prophecies, ii. 18-19, 20-23.

Shebat, i. e. Feb.-Mar. One of the post-exilic names of the Jewish months, derived from Babylonia. Cf. vii. 1.

8. red: i. e., probably, as we should say, *chestnut.*

in the bottom. The word is used elsewhere only of the 'deep' of the sea (Ps. cvii. 24 *al.*); and its applicability to a valley-bottom is very doubtful. The rend. of RVm., *shady place* (cf. LXX *τῶν κατασκίων*), or *glen*, implying the least possible change in the vocalization, is preferable.

horses, red, sorrel, and white. Then said I, O my lord, 9
what are these? And the angel that talked with me said
unto me, I will shew thee what these be. And the man 10
that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said,
These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to
and fro through the earth. And they answered the 11
angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees,
and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth,
and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.
Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD 12

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sorrel: i. e. *yellowish-red.* The reason why the horses are mentioned, rather than their riders, appears to be because some significance is regarded as attaching to their colours; though what this significance is, is not explained, and is by no means self-evident. Most probably the colours stand in some relation to the quarters of the earth which the horsemen are supposed to have been severally patrolling (cf. vi. 2, 3, 6): the supposition (Keil) that they have a reference to the mission which they had to discharge is not supported by the context: all bring back the same report (the case of Rev. vi. 2, 4, 8, is obviously different).

9. O my lord, what are these? The words are addressed to the interpreting angel, of whose presence in the vision we are first made aware by this question and the following answer.

the angel that talked with me. The title by which the angel who explains to Zechariah what he beholds is distinguished throughout the visions (i. 13, 14, 19, ii. 3, iv. 1, 4, 5, v. 10, vi. 4).

I will shew thee (*lit.* 'make thee see'). He does not say, *I will tell thee*, but *I will shew thee*, i. e. thou wilt see directly what they are.

10. And the man that stood, &c. The rider on the front horse mentioned in *v.* 8 here interposes, and explains that the horsemen are the scouts whom Yahweh has sent out to patrol the earth, and report what is taking place upon it.

to walk to and fro: i. e. to patrol (cf. Job i. 7).

11. Hereupon the horsemen speak themselves, and report to Yahweh's angel—who also, it now appears, as well as the rider of *vv.* 8, 10, stood among the myrtle-trees—that nothing is stirring in the whole earth; there is no sign of any movement bringing in for Israel the Messianic age. Zechariah did not attach to the commotions in the Persian empire (p. 150) the same significance that Haggai appears to have done.

12. Taking the text as it stands (see note on *v.* 13), Yahweh's

of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?
13 And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me

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angel, though from one point of view representing Yahweh (*v.* 11), is from another point of view independent of Him, and represents the feelings of Zechariah and his countrymen, who could not but be disappointed at the answer given by the horsemen in *v.* 11; accordingly he makes intercession on behalf of Israel, and asks Yahweh why, though seventy years have passed (B.C. 586–520), His anger,—as was popularly inferred at the time (see p. 150) to be the case,—still rested upon Judah and Jerusalem. In this intercession of Yahweh's angel on Israel's behalf we may, perhaps, see the beginning of the doctrine of patron angels, representing particular peoples, which meets us later in a more developed form in the Book of Daniel (Dan. x. 21, xii. 1).

answered. The word does not necessarily mean 'replied to a question'; it may mean, as it does in *v.* 11, 'spoke in a manner corresponding to a particular situation, or the feelings called forth by it': cf. for instance, Job iii. 2; Is. xiv. 10; Dan. iii. 14, iv. 19.

not have mercy. Better, **have no compassion,**—the word used in Is. xiv. 1, xlix. 13; Ps. cii. 13.

13. Yahweh Himself now intervenes, and 'answers' the interpreting angel with comforting assurances. Under what form Yahweh appeared in the vision is not indicated by Zechariah, any more than it is by Amos in Am. vii. 1-9, viii. 1-3, ix. 1: He is introduced abruptly, just as the interpreting angel is in *v.* 9, and 'Yahweh's angel' in *v.* 11[1].

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[1] The explanation of this vision given above (which is that of Keil) appears to the present writer to be the most satisfactory and consistent: but it must be allowed that the description, in some of its details, is not very distinctly expressed; and some commentators have identified the 'angel of Yahweh that stood among the myrtle trees' of *v.* 11 with the 'man riding the red horse,' and also 'standing among the myrtle trees,' of *vv.* 8, 10 (so e.g. T. T. Perowne), and (understanding 'answered' in *v.* 13 in its strict sense) the 'angel of Yahweh' in *v.* 12 with the 'angel that talked with me' of *vv.* 9, 13. This interpretation certainly imparts clearness into the description; but it can scarcely be the intention of the text as it stands. Accordingly We., Now., Marti, who adopt it, suppose the text to have been altered, and confused, in consequence of a misunderstanding, and correct it so as to make it express it distinctly; thus they read in *v.* 8 'a man standing among' &c. (so already

with good words, *even* comfortable words. So the angel 14
that talked with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying,
Thus saith the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am 15
very sore displeased with the nations that are at ease:
for I was but a little displeased, and they [a] helped
forward the affliction. Therefore thus saith the LORD: 16

[a] Or, *helped for evil.*

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good words: i. e. gracious words, promises of prosperity: cf. Josh. xxiii. 14; Jer. xxix. 10.

14–17. The assurances of *v.* 13 particularized more closely, and communicated by the interpreting angel to the prophet, to be proclaimed by him to the people at large.

14. Cry: i. e. *Proclaim*; cf. Is. xl. 6, lviii. 1.

I am jealous. 'I have been and still am jealous' is what the Heb. tense used implies. Yahweh's 'jealousy' for His people (cf. viii. 2) prompts Him now at last to interpose on its behalf: cf. Ez. xxxvi. 5, 6, xxxviii. 19; Is. xlii. 13, lix. 17.

15. But Yahweh is sore displeased with the nations; for they had done more evil to Israel than they were commissioned to do: He was angry (relatively) but a little with Israel, but they had **helped unto evil,** i. e. had helped, not simply as His instruments for the correction of Israel, but *for evil* (Jer. xliv. 11), or calamity, seeking to exterminate Israel. 'The fall of the Chaldaeans had effected nothing; the Persians were no better than the Chaldaeans; the power of the heathen had yet to be broken before the Messianic kingdom could be realized. The Jews were evidently in despair, because, even after their return to Palestine, things still went on quietly in their old way' (We.).

at ease: in careless and godless security (Am. vi. 1; Is. xxxii. 9, 11), indifferent or contemptuous towards others (Job xii. 5; Ps. cxxiii. 4).

16, 17. Now, therefore, Yahweh's anger against His people is turned into compassion: the Temple and city will be rebuilt, and His people will again enjoy prosperity.

16. am returned, &c. Cf. Is. lii. 8^{b}.

Ewald), and 'before' for 'behind,' they omit *v.* 10 as an incorrect gloss, anticipating *v.* 11, and they read in *v.* 11 'the man' for 'the angel of Yahweh,' and in *v.* 12 'the angel that talked with me' for 'the angel of Yahweh.' These corrections are, however, violent; and the indistinctness in the representation may, after all, be original.

I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house
shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line
17 shall be stretched forth over Jerusalem. Cry yet again,
saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts: My cities [a]through
prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD
shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.
18 [b]And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four

[a] Or, *shall yet overflow with prosperity*

[b] [Ch. ii. 1 in Heb.]

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with mercies. Rather, **with compassion** (as in vii. 9).

my house shall be built in it. The rebuilding of the Temple, in which Yahweh might again, as of old, take up His abode (cf. ii. 10), would be the final proof that the period of His wrath was at an end, and that He again viewed His people with favour. Cf. the solemn departure of Yahweh from His Temple, as seen in Ezekiel's vision, Ez. x. 18 f., xi. 23, and His re-entry into it, Ez. xliii. 4, 5.

and a line, &c.: i. e. the measuring-line; fig. for 'the city will be rebuilt.' Cf. Jer. xxxi. 38-40.

17. my cities. The promise is here extended to the other 'cities of Judah' (*v.* 12) inhabited by the returned exiles: cf. Jer. xxxiii. 12, 13; and Neh. xi. 25 ff.

shall yet overflow (Pr. v. 16) **with prosperity.** The marg. of RV. is to be followed.

shall yet comfort Zion. Cf. Is. li. 3, lii. 9^b. LXX, however, has *have compassion on* (רחם for נחם), which suits the context better (see *v.* 12). Cf. Is. xiv. 1, of which 'shall yet choose' is in any case a reminiscence; also xlix. 13^b, Jer. xxx. 18 *al.*

18-21. *The second vision.* The Four Horns and the Four Smiths. The prophet sees four horns, towering up, we may suppose perhaps, out of the distant darkness, with threatening mien, which he is told are the powers that have scattered Judah. Thereupon four smiths appear, who, he learns, are to strike down and disable the horns of the nations. The vision symbolizes the destruction of the heathen powers which had oppressed Israel, and threatened now to frustrate the fulfilment of the promises given in *v.* 16. The four horns point to the four quarters of the heavens (cf. ii. 6, vi. 2-6), and represent consequently Israel's enemies in every direction, or the heathen world at large. The hostility shown towards Israel by its more immediate neighbours is here generalized, and becomes an antagonism between Israel and the world at large (comp., later, Dan. ii and vii).

horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, 19
What be these? And he answered me, These are the
horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.
And the LORD shewed me four smiths. Then said I, 20, 21
What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These
are the horns which scattered Judah, so that no man
did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them,
to cast down the horns of the nations, which lifted up
their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.

[a] And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold a **2**

[a] [Ch. ii. 5 in Heb.]

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18. four horns. The horn is the symbol of aggressive might: Mic. iv. 13; Ps. lxxvi. 10, and frequently.

19. scattered. The expression is not applicable to a 'horn,' as such; but the prophet is thinking of the powers or peoples which the horns represent.

Judah, (even) **Israel and Jerusalem.** So the text must be rendered, the last three words being epexegetical. But they look very much like an explanatory gloss (cf. 'Judah' alone, *v.* 21).

20. shewed me. In the vision: as Am. vii. 1, 4, 7, viii. 1; Jer. xxiv. 1.

smiths, i. e. *iron*-smiths, the horns being, no doubt, pictured as made of iron (Mic. iv. 13). These 'smiths' are symbolical representations of the agencies by which God will overthrow the enemies of His people.

21. And he spake: viz. the interpreting angel.

so that, &c. Read probably *so that it lifted not up its head* (אשר for איש: cf., for the Hebrew, Mal. ii. 9).

to fray them. An archaism for *to make them afraid* (so, for the same Heb., Zeph. iii. 13 *al.*),—'afraid' being just the passive participle of to 'af-fray.' Better (as 'afraid' is now a weaker word in English than it was formerly), **to affright** (or **disturb**) **them.** In using the word Zechariah is thinking, as in the case of 'scattered,' not of the 'horns' (which could not be 'affrighted'), but of the peoples which the horns represent.

ii. 1-5. *The third vision.* The Man with the Measuring Line. A man with a measuring-line goes forth to lay out the site of the restored city; but he is interrupted by the interpreting angel: the new Jerusalem is to have no walls, for its population will be free to spread far and wide; and Yahweh will be its sufficient defence.

2 man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I,
Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure
Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what
3 is the length thereof. And, behold, the angel that
talked with me went forth, and another angel went out
4 to meet him, and said unto him, Run, speak to this
young man, saying, Jerusalem shall [a] be inhabited as
villages without walls, by reason of the multitude of men
5 and cattle therein. For I, saith the LORD, will be unto
her a wall of fire round about, and I will be the glory in

[a] Or, *dwell*

---

2. what is, &c. Rather, **what should be**; for Jerusalem was still only partially built.

3. went forth: viz. from beside me. But probably we should read, with LXX (εἱστήκει), *stood still* (cf. iii. 5 *end*),—'went forth' being a *lapsus calami*, occasioned by the following 'went out' (the Hebrew for both expressions being the same).

went out. Better, **came forth,** viz. from some other part of the field of vision.

4. and said. Rather, **and he said,** the subject being, most probably, the interpreting angel, who remains always beside the prophet, and is not likely to have been sent on a message elsewhere (*v.* 4).

unto him: i. e. to the 'other angel' of *v.* 3.

this young man. The man with the measuring-line,—the expression being, perhaps, used as implying one liable to act without consideration (1 K. iii. 7). The man with the measuring-line is to be stopped in his attempt to define the limits of the new city: Jerusalem will be too populous to admit of walls, and too secure, under Yahweh's protection (*v.* 5), to need them.

shall be inhabited: Heb. *shall sit.* A city, or country, when inhabited and prosperous, is said in Hebrew *to sit* or *dwell* (Is. xiii. 20; Jer. l. 13 *al.*). Cf. on Nah. iii. 8.

as villages without walls. *Lit.* 'as open-country-districts,' as opposed to walled cities: cf. Ez. xxxviii. 11 ('a land of open-country-districts,' || 'dwelling without walls'); also 1 S. vi. 18, Dt. iii. 5 (see on Hab. iii. 14). The idea of the expansion of Jerusalem in the ideal future as Is. xxxiii. 17, xlix. 19, 20, liv. 2.

5. For the thought of Yahweh surrounding Jerusalem with His protection, cf.,—though the figures are different,—Is. xxxiii. 21, xxvi. 1, lx. 18^{b}.

and a glory will I be, &c. Cf. Is. lx. 1, 2; Ez. xliii. 2, 4, 5.

the midst of her. Ho, ho, flee from the land of the 6
north, saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad as
the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD. Ho 7
Zion, escape, thou that dwellest with the daughter of

6–13. A lyric epilogue, attached to the vision, in which the prophet (1) in jubilant tones, recalling parts of II Isaiah, bids the Jews still in exile escape from the judgement about to break upon the heathen, and return to Palestine, *vv.* 6–9; and (2) calls upon Zion to exult, because Yahweh is about to take up again His abode in Jerusalem, and many nations will join themselves to Him, *vv.* 10–13.

6. flee. Cf. Is. xlviii. 20, lii. 11.

the land of the north. An expression used vaguely, especially in Jeremiah (iii. 18, xxiii. 8 *al.*), of the land of Israel's exile, and understood, it seems, as including even Babylonia. Cf. on Zeph. ii. 13.

for I have spread you abroad, &c. The passage is difficult. (1) As rendered in RV., *have spread abroad* will naturally mean 'have *scattered* you' (see the same Hebrew in Ps. lxviii. 14, Ez. xvii. 21): in this case, however, 'as the four winds of heaven' agrees badly with 'the land of the north' from which alone Israel has just been bidden to return (see also *v.* 7 'Babylon'). (2) Hitzig, Keil, Wright, therefore, understand the words as a promise of future extension, the perfect being the prophetic perfect = 'I *will* spread you abroad'; but the thought of the restored Jews being spread abroad 'as the four winds of heaven,' i. e. generally over the earth, does not harmonize with *v.* 12, which implies that they are to be confined to Judah. (3) LXX has 'for *I will gather you from* the four winds of heaven': this yields the best sense; and, in spite of the not very easy corruption of קבצתי to פרשתי, which it presupposes, is probably to be preferred (so We., Now., Marti).

the four winds of the heaven. A late expression: vi. 5; Jer. xlix. 36; Dan. viii. 8, xi. 4.

7. Zion: i. e. the population of Zion; here, of such parts of it as were still in exile. However, We., Now., G. A. Smith, render more probably (with LXX), *Ho, escape unto Zion*: for the order of words in the Heb. in this case, cf. Josh. ii. 16; 1 S. v. 8; 1 K. ii. 26; Jer. ii. 10; Is. xxiii. 12.

escape. For a judgement is impending over the heathen world (*v.* 9; i. 21): cf. Is. xlv. 20; Jer. l. 8, 10, li. 6, 45.

thou that dwellest with. In the Heb. '*inhabitress* of,' the term denoting the community, as often (e. g. Jer. x. 17; Mic. i. 11, 12: see RVm.). The 'daughter of Babylon' is a personification of the population of Babylon (on Zeph. iii. 14); but the entire

8 Babylon. For thus saith the LORD of hosts: [a] After
glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled
you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his
9 eye. For, behold, I will shake mine hand over them,

[a] Or, *After the glory, he hath &c.*

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expression, as here used, is peculiar; and probably בת ('daughter') is simply a dittograph, and we should render, 'Ho, escape unto Zion, thou inhabitress of Babylon' (i. e. the Jewish community still resident in Babylon).

8, 9. A very difficult passage, though the general sense is plain: let the exiles still in Babylon hasten to quit it (*v.* 7), because (*v.* 9) it is God's purpose to execute judgement upon the nations who have spoiled them. As the text stands, the speaker must be the angel of *v.* 3^{b}, who was told by the interpreting angel to give the promises contained in *vv.* 4^{b}, 5; and he must say that he had been sent against the nations which had spoiled Israel *after glory*, i. e. either *to win glory* or success in his mission (Hitz., Ew.), or (Keil) *to gain glory* or *honour* (as the cognate verb is also rendered, Ex. xiv. 4, 17, 18) over the heathen, by executing God's judgement upon them (cf. Ez. xxviii. 22, xxxix. 13). There is, however, nothing to suggest that the angel is the speaker here, especially as a new paragraph appears to begin with *v.* 6; and that the speaker in 'hath sent me' is the prophet is strongly supported by *v.* 9 *end*, compared with *v.* 11^{b}, iv. 9^{b}, and vi. 15. Hence We., Now., G. A. Smith, Marti, suppose that the words 'after glory he hath sent me' are either out of place, or parenthetical; and render, 'For thus saith Yahweh of hosts—(after glory hath he sent me)—unto (*or* concerning) the nations that spoil you (for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye), that, behold, I will swing my hand over them,' &c. This yields a more probable general sense: the objection to it is that the appearance here of the words *after glory hath he sent me* is unexplained: why should either the prophet himself, or, if the words are a gloss, another on his behalf, thus strangely express his hope of success in his mission?[1]

8. toucheth the apple of his eye: i. e. touches what is most precious to Him, and most carefully guarded: cf. Dt. xxxii. 10 (where Israel is said to be 'kept' by Yahweh 'as the apple of his eye'); Ps. xvii. 8.

9. shake. Better, **swing**: see Is. xi. 15, xix. 16; cf. x. 32.

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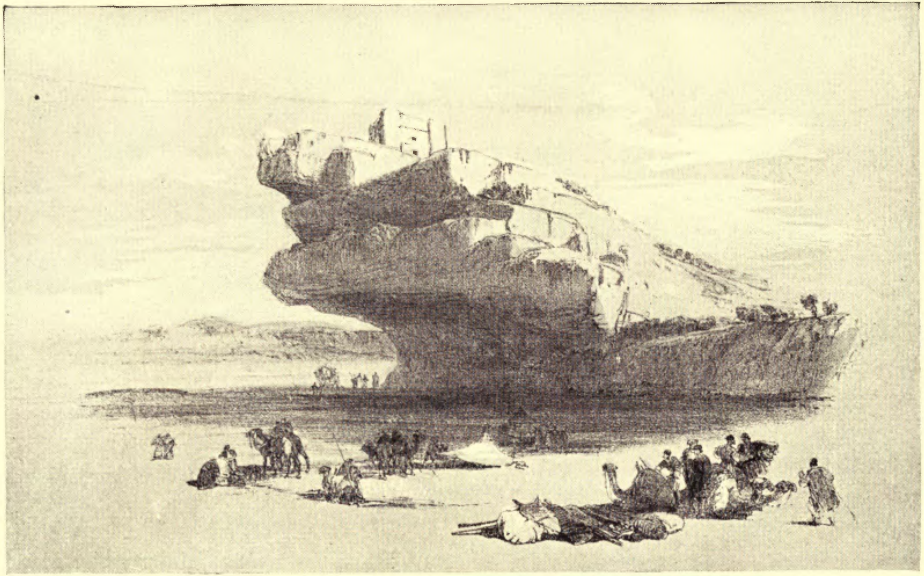
[1] RVm. (=AV.) means 'After the glory promised in *v.* 5 has come upon Israel'; but there is no art. in the Heb. to show that there is any reference to *v.* 5, nor is the sense thus obtained probable in itself.



Drawing by David Roberts, R.A.

AN ANCIENT WATCH-TOWER

and they shall be a spoil to those that served them: and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.
Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, 10
and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.
And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in 11
that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD
of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the LORD shall 12
inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and shall
yet choose Jerusalem. Be silent, all flesh, before the 13
LORD: for he is waked up out of his holy habitation.

and they shall be a spoil, &c. The tables will be turned; and now the nations will become a spoil to Israel. Cf. Is. xiv. 2^b, li. 22^b, 23^a, Ez. xxxix. 10^b.

and ye shall know, &c. Cf. *v.* 11^b, iv. 9^b, vi. 15.

10. Sing and rejoice. Cf. Zeph. iii. 14.

and I will dwell in the midst of thee: viz. when the Temple is rebuilt. The expression, as in the priestly narrative of the Pent., with reference to the Tabernacle (Ex. xxv. 8, xxix. 45, 46; cf. also 1 K. vi. 13): in the future which the prophet here contemplates the ideal relation of Yahweh to His people will be established (cf. Ez. xliii. 9).

11. Many nations will moreover *join themselves* (Is. xiv. 1^b; Jer. l. 4) to Yahweh, and become His people (cf. viii. 22). A reaffirmation of older prophecies of the future adhesion of heathen nations to the religion of Israel: e. g. Is. ii. 3, xviii. 7, xix. 18-25; Jer. xvi. 19.

be to me a people: commonly said of Israel: see on viii. 8.

11^b. The thought of *vv.* 10^b, 9^b, repeated for emphasis.

12^a. Cf. Dt. xxxii. 9.

the holy land. This expression occurs only here. Cf. analogous expressions in Ex. xv. 13, Is. xi. 9, Ps. lxxviii. 54 RVm., &c.

shall yet choose Jerusalem. Cf. i. 17^b, Is. xiv. 1.

13. The judgement upon the unfriendly heathen world (*v.* 9; cf. Hag. ii. 20) is imminent: already Yahweh is bestirring Himself in His holy place; let all, therefore, be silent in awe before Him.

Be silent, &c. As Zeph. i. 7, Hab. ii. 20. Lit. **Hush!**

is waked up. Cf., for the word, Ps. xliv. 23; for the thought, Is. lxvi. 6.

out of his holy habitation. Cf. Dt. xxvi. 15; Jer. xxv. 30.

3 And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and [a] Satan standing at

[a] That is, *the Adversary*.

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iii. *The fourth vision.* The High-Priest, Joshua, and the Satan. Joshua, the high-priest, appears, standing before Yahweh, clothed in filthy garments, symbolizing the iniquities of the people: the Satan, essaying to accuse him, is rebuked; his filthy garments are removed from him, and his iniquities are taken away (*vv.* 1–5). After this he is given rule over the Temple, with the right of priestly access to Yahweh, and receives a promise of the advent of the Messiah, the forgiveness of the people's sin, and the restoration of national felicity (*vv.* 6–10).

The disappointments and vexations of the restoration (p. 149) were felt keenly by the returned exiles, and seemed to them to be an indication that Yahweh was still angry with His people (i. 12 ff.), on account viz. of the idolatries and other iniquities of their forefathers, the guilt of which still rested upon them, and was brought to remembrance against them before God. In the present dramatically conceived vision, these disturbing thoughts are set at rest. It is emphatically taught that no impediment exists in God's eyes to Israel's complete restoration: the Satan, who is pictured as the accuser, is silenced; whatever guilt still attaches to Israel is removed by Yahweh's free grace.

1. And he shewed me. As i. 20.

Joshua. See on Hag. i. 1.

standing before Yahweh's angel: viz. in a forensic sense, as his judge (Dt. xix. 17; Rom. xiv. 10; Rev. xx. 12).

the Satan. The word 'Satan' means *opposer*; and denotes one who sets himself to *oppose* or *thwart* another in his purpose (Nu. xxii. 22, 32; 2 S. xix. 22; 1 K. v. 4, xi. 14, 23, 25: EVV. 'adversary'), or claims, sometimes with the collateral idea, of *accusing maliciously* or *falsely* (Ps. cix. 6; cf. the cognate verb *vv.* 4. 20, 29, Zech. iii. 1 *end*). It appears further in the OT. as the name of a specific angel, 'the Opposer,' whose part it is to *oppose* men in their pretensions to a right standing with God, and to test their sincerity (Job i–ii), to prompt them to do acts which will bring them into disfavour with God (1 Chr. xxi. 1), and, as here, to remind God, in no friendly spirit, of their sins. The Satan does not appear in the OT., as in the NT., as definitely *tempting* to sin. The word always in the OT., except in 1 Chr. xxi. 1, has the article, and was therefore felt distinctly to mean 'the Opposer.' In LXX it is represented by διάβολος, the 'false accuser,' from the collateral idea referred to above. See further

his right hand to be his adversary. And the Lord said 2
unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; yea, the
Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not
this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was 3
clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.
And he answered and spake unto those that stood 4
before him, saying, Take the filthy garments from off
him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused
thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee

A. B. Davidson's note on Job i. 6 (in the *Cambr. Bible*); and G. A. Smith, pp. 317 ff.

at his right hand. The place of the accuser, Ps. cix. 6.

to be his adversary. In the Heb. one word, the verb cognate with 'Satan' (see the last note but one), and meaning *to oppose*, especially with false or malicious accusations (Ps. xxxviii. 20, lxxi. 13, cix. 4, 20, 29).

2. And Yahweh said. As the sequel shows, 'Yahweh' must here mean 'Yahweh's angel,' even if it be not a textual error for it (We., Now., Marti). Joshua is the people's spiritual representative; and in opposing him before Yahweh the Satan is in effect opposing, or maliciously accusing, the people, with the object viz. of showing that they had not yet been punished as much as their sins deserved. But he is silenced by Yahweh's angel: Yahweh, he is reminded, has *chosen Jerusalem* (1 K. viii. 44, xi. 13, &c.; cf. ch. i. 17, ii. 12); and was it necessary to persecute still further a 'brand plucked out of the fire'?

a brand plucked out of the fire: i.e. already greatly burnt, and only just saved from complete destruction. Nearly the same expression occurs in Am. iv. 11.

3. with filthy garments. Symbolizing the iniquity of the people. For 'filth' (צואה) as fig. of sin, cf. Is. iv. 4, Pr. xxx. 12; and for the figure of the garment, Rev. iii. 4, 5, vii. 14, xix. 8.

stood before. As *v.* 1, in a forensic sense.

4. Symbolical removal of Joshua's (i.e. the people's) iniquities.

he: i.e. the angel. **'Answered,'** as i. 12.

those that stood before him. Viz. in attendance, waiting upon him, the allusion being to subordinate angels, by whom he would be pictured as surrounded. To *stand before* often has the sense of to 'wait upon'; for instance, Dt. i. 38, 1 S. xvi. 21, 1 K. x. 8.

caused to pass . . . from upon thee. As 2 S. xii. 23, xxiv. 10; Job vii. 21.

5 with rich apparel. And [a] I said, Let them set a fair
[b] mitre upon his head. So they set a fair [b] mitre upon
his head, and clothed him with garments; and the
6 angel of the LORD stood by. And the angel of the
7 LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the
LORD of hosts: If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if
thou wilt keep my charge, then thou also shalt judge my

[a] According to some ancient authorities, *he said.*

[b] Or, *turban* Or, *diadem*

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rich apparel. As a mark of honour, and (indirectly) of purity. The word occurs besides only in Is. iii. 23, where it is rendered in RV. *festival robes.*

5. And I said, &c. If the text is correct, we must suppose that the prophet, anxious to see the high-priest more suitably clad, and watching with keen interest what was being done, involuntarily gives vent to his feelings, and expresses, though only as a wish, not as a command, what he desires to see done. But this is not very natural. The Syr. and the Vulg. (cf. RVm.) have *And he said* (i. e. the angel said), which is probably right. The LXX also, omitting *And I said* altogether, expresses the same sense.

fair. Better, **clean,** as the word (טהור) is usually rendered. This, however, was a common meaning of 'fair' in Old English (*DB.* s. v.); cf. in the Communion Service 'a *fair* white linen cloth.'

mitre. Better, **turban** (צניף), the word used of the *turban* of rich women (Is. iii. 23), or of royal or eminent persons (Is. lxii. 3; Job xxix. 14: not elsewhere), from צנף to 'wind round' (Is. xxii. 18 RVm.). It is here a mark of the dignity possessed by the high-priest; but the high-priest's 'turban' itself was called not *ẓānīf*, but *miẓnépheth*, Ex. xxviii. 4 *al.*

and the angel of the Lord stood by. Rather, **the angel of Yahweh standing** (a circumstantial clause), viz. while the high-priest's garments were being changed.

6–7. Promise to Joshua: if he is faithful to Yahweh, and duly maintains the rites of His worship, then he will have permanent authority over the Temple ('judge my house, and keep my courts'), and enjoy the right of entry to Yahweh's presence (viz. as the people's representative). In pre-exilic times the king was supreme over the Temple: here the authority which belonged formerly to the king is conferred upon the high-priest, upon the one condition of his being faithful to his charge.

6. protested: i. e. solemnly declared (Gen. xliii. 3; Jer. xi. 7).

7. keep my charge. In a ritual sense: Ez. xliv. 15, xlviii. 11.

house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give
thee [a] a place of access among these that stand by.
Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy 8
fellows that sit before thee; for they are men which are
a [b] sign: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the
[c] Branch. For behold, the stone that I have set before 9

[a] Or, *places to walk* [b] Or, *wonder* [c] Or, *Shoot* Or, *Sprout*

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a place of access. RVm. gives the lit. rendering: RV. text is a paraphrase, explaining what is really intended. Cf. Jer. xxx. 21.

among these that stand by. I. e. that stand in attendance (iv. 14), the reference being to the attendant angels mentioned in *v.* 4. Cf. 1 K. xxii. 19, of Yahweh's celestial court.

8–9. Promise of the advent of the Messianic age.

8. thy fellows: i. e. the other, inferior priests, who 'sit before' (cf. 2 K. iv. 38, vi. 1; Ez. viii. 1, xiv. 1) the high-priest, receiving their instructions from him.

they are men of omen that, behold! I am bringing my servant, &c. The restored priesthood is a pledge of the approach of the Messianic kingdom. For 'portent' or 'omen' (מופת), cf. Is. viii. 18, where Isaiah and his sons, in virtue of their names, are 'signs and *omens*' of a brighter future for Israel; and Ez. xii. 6, 11, xxiv. 24, 27, where Ezekiel, in what he there does, is an 'omen' or 'portent' of the future. As the text stands, it is only Joshua's brother-priests, not Joshua himself, who are the 'men of omen': and We., Now., Smith, Marti are probably right in omitting כי ('for') after לפניך ('before thee'), and rendering 'Hear, now, O Joshua the high-priest: thou and thy fellows that sit before thee are men of omen that I am bringing,' &c.

my servant. Of the ideal ruler of the future, or 'Messiah,' as Ez. xxxiv. 24, xxxvii. 24.

the Shoot (or rather, since there is no art., as a pr. name, **Ẓemaḥ,** 'Shoot'). The Heb. *ẓemaḥ* cannot mean 'branch': as its other occurrences show, it is a general term for what *sprouts* or *shoots* from the ground (see e. g. Gen. xix. 25 'the *growth* of the ground,' where 'branch' would obviously be unsuitable). In Is. iv. 2 the 'growth' or 'shooting' of Yahweh means generally the produce of the soil, quickened and blessed by Yahweh in the blissful future which the prophet is there looking forward to: in Jer. xxiii. 5 ('Behold the days come, saith Yahweh, that I will raise up to David a righteous *shoot*, and he shall reign as king and prosper'), and in the parallel passage, xxxiii. 15 ('In those days

Joshua; upon one stone are seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.
10 In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every

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will I cause to *shoot forth* unto David a *shoot* of righteousness') it is a fig. designation of Israel's future ideal king, represented as a *sprout* or *shoot*; and here and in Zech. vi. 12, obviously on the basis of the two passages of Jeremiah, it is used actually as a title of the Messiah. vi. 12, compared with iv. 9, seems to show that Zech. means Zerubbabel, whose person is idealized, and who, when the Temple is finished, and the Messianic age has begun, will be the supreme civil ruler in it (cf. Hag. ii. 23). Observe that the expression, *Behold, I am bringing*, implies something conceived as taking place in the immediate future.

9. The meaning of the symbolism of this verse is uncertain. The following are the two most probable explanations. (1) That of Ewald, Steiner, T. T. Perowne, and Marti (Comm.) that the 'stone' is the same stone as that of iv. 7, the head or coping-stone of the Temple: it is lying in the vision before Joshua; the 'seven eyes' are those of Yahweh, symbolizing (as in iv. 10) His all-seeing providence; they are ever 'upon' it (Ezr. v. 5), and it will be engraven by Him with some appropriate inscription or ornamentation. The symbolism thus expresses in a word Yahweh's care for the completion of the Temple. (2) That of We. and Smend, that the 'stone' is a jewel in the diadem of the coming Messiah: the seven 'eyes' are seven facets upon it; upon one of these, probably the central one, Yahweh will engrave the name of the Messianic ruler, i. e. Zerubbabel (see the last note). Upon this view, the symbolism declares how all is ready for the advent of the Messianic ruler: Yahweh has even prepared the crown that he is to wear.

and I will remove, &c. With the completion of the Temple, the Messianic age begins; and the first event by which it is marked is the removal of the people's sin. The promise to Joshua (*vv.* 7–9) thus ends appropriately with words showing that a repetition of the Satan's accusation (*v.* 1) will be no more possible. Freedom from sin is one of the standing traits of the ideal future, as depicted by the prophets: cf. Is. i. 26, iv. 3–4, xxxii. 1–8, xxxiii. 24; Jer. xxxi. 33 f.; Ez. xxxvi. 25 f.; Dan. ix. 24.

in one day. Quickly, and completely: cf. Is. ix. 14, x. 17, xlvii. 9.

10. The general felicity which will then prevail.

shall ye call . . . under: i. e. call them *in under* (אל תחת), invite them to come and sit under. To sit under one's own vine and man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.

And the angel that talked with me came again, and 4
waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep.
And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I 2
have seen, and behold, a candlestick all of gold, with its
bowl upon the top of it, and its seven lamps thereon;

---

fig tree implies peace and security (1 K. iv. 25 [Heb. v. 5]; 1 Macc. xiv. 12, of the days of Simon): here a characteristic trait of the Messianic age, borrowed from Mic. iv. 4. Cf. viii. 12.

iv. *The fifth vision.* The Seven-Branched Candlestick and the Two Olive-Trees. The prophet sees a seven-branched golden candlestick, such as stood afterwards in the Second Temple, with seven lamps, fed by seven pipes from a bowl or reservoir of oil standing above them, and two olive trees standing beside it, one on each side, which (if *v.* 12 is genuine) supplied oil to the reservoir (comp. the illustration in Wright, p. 84). *Vv.* 6–10 contain an encouragement addressed to Zerubbabel: difficulties, it is said, will disappear before him, and in spite of mockers, he will himself finish the Temple which he has now begun.

The vision is a difficult one, and has been very differently interpreted. Taking the text as it stands, the candlestick with its seven lamps is generally supposed to symbolize the restored Jewish Church shining with the light of the Spirit (cf. Rev. i. 20), and receiving its supply of Divine grace (the oil) through the two channels of the spiritual and temporal power, Joshua and Zerubbabel (represented by the two olive trees, with the connecting spouts of *v.* 12). In the following notes the text is first explained in accordance with this general view, a new interpretation, which has much in its favour, being given afterwards.

1. and waked me, &c. The prophet, though still in his trance, was so affected by what he had seen and heard in the preceding visions, that he seemed to himself to have fallen into a state of stupor, from which he had to be roused by the interpreting angel, before he could become conscious of a fresh vision.

as a man, &c. He was not roused actually out of sleep.

2. What seest thou? introducing the description of the vision, as Am. vii. 8, viii. 2, Jer. i. 11, 13.

bowl: i. e. reservoir of oil.

seven lamps. In the Temple of Solomon there were ten separate golden candlesticks (1 K. vii. 49; cf. Jer. lii. 19); but in the Priestly Code (Ex. xxv. 31–40) a single seven-branched

[a] there are seven pipes to each of the lamps, which are
3 upon the top thereof: and two olive trees by it, one
upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the
4 left side thereof. And I answered and spake to the
angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my
5 lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered
and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be?
6 And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake
unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto
Zerubbabel, saying, Not by [b] might, nor by power, but
7 by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. Who art thou,

[a] The Sept. and Vulgate have, *and seven pipes to the lamps.*

[b] Or, *an army*

---

candlestick, also of gold, is prescribed,—the lamps of which, however, were not, like those in the vision, supplied with oil from a reservoir, but were trimmed and fixed on daily (Ex. xxvii. 20 RVm., 21) by the priests; and a candlestick of the same kind stood in the Second Temple, as we learn from 1 Macc. i. 23, iv. 49, and from the representation on the Arch of Titus.

seven pipes to each of the lamps. To symbolize, it has been supposed, the plentiful supply of oil. But the number, which would obviously give forty-nine pipes in all, is improbably large; and LXX and Vulg. (cited on RVm.) are most likely right in reading *seven pipes to the lamps*, i. e. one to each.

upon the top thereof: i. e. upon the top of the candlestick. But we should expect simply *upon it* (עליהּ, as just before, 'thereon').

4. The prophet inquires the meaning of the seven lamps.

And I answered: i.e. *began*, in the sense explained on i. 12.

6–10. Promises to Zerubbabel.

6. This is the word, &c. If the text is here in order (see below) the meaning must be, This is the teaching of the vision, it is a message from Yahweh to Zerubbabel.

Not by might, &c. Zerubbabel will accomplish the work that he has in hand, not by human 'might,' or 'power,' but by the spirit of Yahweh (Hag. ii. 5) strengthening him.

7. Who art thou, &c.: i. e. whatever obstacles or difficulties may arise to impede Zerubbabel in his work, they will disappear before him. The apathy of the people, and the opposition of the Samaritans and others, had indeed, at any rate for the time, been

O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become*
a plain: and he shall bring forth the head stone with
shoutings of Grace, grace, unto it. Moreover the word 8
of the LORD came unto me, saying, The hands of 9
Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his
hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the
LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath 10
despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice,
and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel,

---

overcome, and the building was in progress: but there might still be reason to fear these or similar hindrances recurring.

he shall bring forth, &c. I. e. he will complete the building of the Temple amid the acclamations of the multitude: Zerubbabel will *bring forth* in triumph, from the workshop in which it had been hewn into shape, *the head stone*,—the final coping-stone of the entire fabric,—*with shoutings of Beautiful! beautiful!* (Now., Marti), i. e. amid the applause and admiration of the people, as they see their Temple at last completed. 'Beautiful, beautiful!' is lit. *Grace* (i. e. *graciousness, beauty*, as Prov. i. 9 'a chaplet of *grace*,' iv. 9), *grace to it!* However, the words might also mean *Favour, favour to it!* (Hitz., Ew., Keil), i. e. May all favour it! 'Faveat ei Deus, faveant homines!'

8–9. A further promise, given through the prophet, that as Zerubbabel has begun the Temple, so he will assuredly finish it: the fulfilment of this prediction will be evidence that Zechariah has not spoken of himself, but has been truly sent by Yahweh (cf. Dt. xviii. 22).

9. thou shalt know: Read, in accordance with the following 'you,' **ye shall know.**

hath sent me unto you. Cf. ii. 9, 11^b, vi. 15.

10. The verse, as the text stands, will mean (Keil), *For who ever despised the day of small things?* i. e. No one who desires to accomplish, or does accomplish, anything great, despises the day of small beginnings; *and these seven*, (even) *the eyes of Yahweh*,—*they run to and fro through the whole earth,—will rejoice and see* (i. e. will see with joy) *the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel*; the verse as a whole thus meaning, 'If no one despises the small beginnings of the Temple, then Yahweh will watch with joy the progress of the work, and assist it with His blessing.' But the sense thus obtained implies a strained interpretation of the words used; and the second part of the verse is very imperfectly connected with the first: see pp. 203 f.

even these seven, *which are* the eyes of the LORD; they
11 run to and fro through the whole earth. Then answered
I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees
upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left
12 side thereof? And I answered the second time, and said
unto him, What be these two olive branches, [a] which
are beside the two golden spouts, that empty [b] the
13 golden *oil* out of themselves? And he answered me and
said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No,

[a] Or, *which by means of the two golden spouts empty*

[b] Heb. *the gold.*

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they run to and fro through the whole earth: and see consequently every danger, from whatever quarter it may arise, which may threaten the progress of the building (Hitzig). Cf. 2 Chr. xvi. 9 (an evident reminiscence of the present passage); Rev. v. 6: also, for the general thought, Prov. xv. 3.

11, 12. The prophet now inquires the meaning of the two olive-trees (*v.* 3); and then, struck by the two 'spikes,' which, as it seems, supplied oil from the olive trees, through two golden spouts, to the reservoir of the candlestick, asks more particularly to have the meaning of these explained to him.

12. these two olive spikes (Pusey). Apparently the extreme ends of fruit-laden boughs; for elsewhere the Hebrew word always means an 'ear' (of corn), as Gen. xli. 5.

the golden oil. Lit. 'the gold,'—a very strange expression for 'golden oil.' Perhaps some words have dropped out and we should read, 'that empty out of themselves [the oil into] the [bowl of] gold.' Targ. has 'into the lamps of gold,' LXX either read or understood 'the pipes of gold' (*v.* 2).

that empty, &c.: as it seems, into the 'bowl' of *v.* 2.

out of: lit. 'from upon,' as 'spouts' would do.

13. The same reply, expressing surprise that Zechariah should not understand the symbolism, as in *v.* 5.

these: i. e. the olive trees of *v.* 11.

14. the two sons of oil. The Heb. word (*yizhār*),—the word used in Dt. vii. 13, xi. 14, &c.,—denotes the freshly expressed juice of the olive; and is not the word (*shémen*) which denotes the oil as prepared for use, and ready, for example, to be employed for a lamp (Ex. xxv. 6), or in anointing (1 S. x. 1). The expression is commonly understood (e. g. by Ew., Hitz., Keil) to mean the two anointed ones, and to symbolize Joshua (as the anointed high-priest, Lev. iv. 3) and Zerubbabel, as representing remy lord. Then said he, These are the two sons of oil, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

spectively the priestly and kingly offices, the channels by which, if *v.* 12 is genuine (see below), Israel (symbolized by the lamps) is kept supplied with the Divine spirit (symbolized by the oil). 'Sons of oil' would, however, suggest rather the idea of *full of oil*,—as indeed an olive tree might be metaphorically said to be,—than anointed with oil: cf. p. 204[1].

that stand by, &c.: characterizing the two 'sons of oil' as Yahweh's servants: see Jud. iii. 19; 1 K. xxii. 19. The expression hardly differs from 'stand *before*,' iii. 4.

the Lord of the whole earth: as vi. 5, Josh. iii. 11, 13, Mic. iv. 13, Ps. xcvii. 5.

It can hardly have escaped the reader's notice that *vv.* 6–14, as they have been now explained, do not in parts yield a satisfactory sense. In *v.* 6 'This is the word,' &c., is not a natural answer to the question asked in *v.* 4; *vv.* 6 (from 'This is the word')–10^{a} in fact interrupt the explanation of the vision with a different subject altogether, viz. the promise to Zerubbabel; and *v.* 10 yields an improbable sense, to say nothing of the awkwardness of the Hebrew (from שבעה אלה), rendered as it must be rendered, with the text as it stands. On the other hand, as Wellhausen was the first to perceive, the words in *v.* 10, which are so awkward where they now stand, would form a perfectly natural answer to the question in *v.* 4; and if it might be assumed that the promise to Zerubbabel in *vv.* 6–10^{a} had become misplaced, and that it was originally an independent prophecy, standing perhaps at the end of the chapter, all would run smoothly. We should then have, viz.:—'[6] And he answered and spake unto me, saying, [10 b] These seven are the eyes of Yahweh, which run to and fro through the whole earth. [11] Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? [[12] And I answered a second time and said unto him, What be these two olive spikes, which are beside the two golden spouts, that empty the gold(en oil) out of themselves?] [13] And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. [14] Then said he, These are the two sons of oil, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

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[1] The use of the expression 'the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth,' in Rev. xi. 4, of the two 'witnesses' (probably Moses and Elijah: notice *v.* 6), though both figures are evidently suggested by this vision of Zechariah, does not throw light on the meaning of its symbolism.

[6b] This is Yahweh's word to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by force, but by my spirit, saith Yahweh of hosts. [7] Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel be thou a plain! and he shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings of Beautiful! beautiful! [8] And Yahweh's word came unto me saying, [9] The hands of Zerubbabel have founded this house, and his hands shall finish it; and ye shall know that Yahweh of hosts hath sent me unto you. [10] For whosoever hath despised the day of small things, they shall see with joy the plummet in the hands of Zerubbabel.'

This view of the original form of the passage has been accepted by Nowack, G. A. Smith, and Marti. If it is correct, the seven lamps (*v.* 2) will symbolize Yahweh's eyes, which, on the one hand, sweep through the whole earth to descry approaching danger or trouble, and to protect and deliver His loyal servants (see especially 2 Chr. xvi. 9), and, on the other hand, are specially present in Israel, to watch over and defend it. *V.* 12 is regarded by Wellh., Nowack, and Marti as an interpolation: not only is the object of the re-formulation of the question in *v.* 11 far from apparent, but the verse describes the candlestick quite differently from *vv.* 2, 3, and is also entirely disregarded by the angel in his answer, *v.* 14; *if*, moreover, it is true that the lamps symbolize Yahweh's eyes, it is incredible, whatever the 'sons of oil' in *v.* 14 signify, that these can be regarded as supplying them with brightness and light. If *v.* 12 is an interpolation, it must be supposed that the olive trees in *v.* 3 were (incorrectly) assumed to be intended for the purpose of supplying the lamps with oil, and that this verse was added in order to express this more distinctly. Of course if *v.* 12 be omitted, the olive trees of *v.* 3 merely *stand beside* the candlestick; they are otherwise unconnected with it, and do not supply the lamps with oil. And the object of this part of the vision, as a whole, will be now to show how Joshua and Zerubbabel,—who, as before, are symbolized by the two olive trees,—(1) stand under Yahweh's ever-watchful protection (*v.* 10^b), and (2) are—not channels of Divine grace to Israel, but—(*v.* 14) filled themselves with Yahweh's spirit (symbolized by the 'oil,' cf. Is. lxi. 1).

In the paragraph which now follows (*vv.* 6^b–10^a), the promise to Zerubbabel will be interpreted exactly as explained above, only *v.* 10^a will have a clearer and better sense: it will form a suitable close to the entire promise, declaring how those who once scoffed at the small beginnings of the Temple will rejoice when at length they see Zerubbabel fix the top-stone in its place. And the 'plummet' will now be, not the plummet by which the building, as course after course of stone is added to it, is kept perpendicular, but (Smith, p. 301) the plummet laid to it for the last time to test the straightness of the top-stone.

Then again I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and **5**
behold, a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest 2
thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length
thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten
cubits. Then said he unto me, This is the curse that 3
goeth forth over the face of the whole land: for every
one that stealeth shall be purged out [a] on the one side

[a] Or, *from hence*

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v. The two visions described in this chapter both emphasize and develop the thought of iii. 9, the removal viz. of sin from Israel in the Messianic age.

1–4. *The sixth vision.* The Flying Roll. The prophet sees a large roll flying through the air. It is inscribed with curses for sins committed; and it enters the house of every thief and perjurer in the land, and destroys it. The vision is intended to symbolize the complete extermination of sinners from the Israel of the future.

1. a flying roll: viz. of skin or parchment, the material ordinarily used for writing on. The flight of the roll signified the swift coming of punishment; its flying from heaven (cf. *v.* 4), that the sentence proceeded from the judgement-seat above (T. T. Perowne).

2. And he said: viz. the interpreting angel (i. 9, &c.).

the length thereof, &c. The colossal size of the roll, some thirty feet long by fifteen broad, is an indication of the number of curses inscribed upon it. From the dimensions given, it is evident that it must be pictured not as wound up, but as unrolled, and forming a huge oblong sheet. The dimensions specified have no particular significance; they merely indicate that the roll is a very large one.

3, 4. The explanation of the vision. The curse goes out over the whole land, and brings punishment upon every thief and perjurer in it.

3. purged out: better, **cleared** or **emptied out** (Is. iii. 26 RVm.). Every thief and perjurer *on the one side* and *on the other side*[1], i.e. wherever he may be in the land, is *cleared away*, or utterly destroyed, *according to* the curse written in the roll, when it alights upon him. The verb *nikkāh* is, however, more frequently used in the fig. sense of, *to clear from guilt*, *hold guiltless*, *leave*

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[1] RVm. *from hence* is a legitimate alternative; but the repetition of מִזֶּה creates a presumption that it has the force of *on this side* and *on that side* (cf. Ex. xvii. 12; Nu. xxii. 24).

according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be
4 purged out [a] on the other side according to it. I will
cause it to go forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall
enter into the house of the thief, and into the house
of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall
abide in the midst of his house, and shall consume it
with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

[a] Or, *from hence.*

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unpunished; hence Now., Marti, following a suggestion of Wellhausen's, read זֶה כַּמֶּה for מִזֶּה כָּמֹהָ, and render: 'for how long hath every one that stealeth been unpunished! and how long hath every one that sweareth (falsely) been unpunished![1]' i. e. crime has hitherto been practised with impunity: henceforth (*v.* 4) that will no longer be the case.

that sweareth. The meaning must be *that sweareth falsely*, even if the words 'by my name falsely' (see *v.* 4) have not accidentally fallen out (We., Now., Marti)[2]. The two sins specified correspond to the third and eighth commandments: but they are manifestly typical of transgression in general.

4. I have brought it out . . . and it shall enter, &c. Yahweh has brought it out; and it will alight with destructive effect upon every thief and perjurer in Israel. 'Perhaps in ancient times curses were written on small pieces of parchment, and committed to the wind, that they might alight upon the houses of those against whom they were directed' (Smend).

shall abide, &c. It will take up its abode there, till it has effected the purpose for which it was sent.

and consume it. The destruction of the tent or house is an old form of punishment (cf. Dan. ii. 5), and is equivalent to the exclusion of the offender and his family from the community to which they belong (We.).

5–11. *The seventh vision.* The Woman in the Barrel. The prophet sees an Ephah, in which, as shortly appears, a woman, the personification of wickedness, is seated. Two winged women then come forward, carry away the Ephah, and deposit it in Babylonia. The vision supplements the preceding one, declaring that not only the sinner, but wickedness, the living principle of sin, is to be permanently banished from the Israel of the future.

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[1] זה, 'now,' as Gen. xxxi. 38, &c.; Zech. vii. 3 (*Lex.* p. 261 [b]); but there is no other case of זה being so used with כמה alone.

[2] To *swear by Yahweh's name,* expressed absolutely, is not a sin, but a mark of loyalty to Him (Dt. vi. 13).

Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and 5
said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what
is this that goeth forth. And I said, What is it? And 6
he said, This is the ephah that goeth forth. He said
moreover, This is their [a] resemblance in all the land:
(and behold, there was lifted up a [b] talent of lead:) and 7
this is a woman sitting in the midst of the ephah. And 8
he said, This is Wickedness; and he cast her down into

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[a] Heb. *eye*. According to some ancient authorities, *iniquity*.

[b] Or, *round piece*

5. went forth: rather, **came forth.** After the close of the last vision he vanished into the surrounding darkness: now he *comes forth* from it into view of the prophet.

and see, &c. The word 'ephah' has probably fallen out; and it is better to read, **and see this ephah that cometh forth,** viz. into the prophet's field of vision. The ephah was equivalent to about seven gallons; it was consequently of considerable size. From *v.* 7 it appears that it had a circular lid; so that it may naturally be supposed to have been shaped like a barrel.

6. Read (for the whole verse): **And I said, What is it? And he said, This is their iniquity in all the land.** The angel's first answer,—at least, if the emended text of *v.* 5 is accepted,—is tautologous; and, in any case, the double answer is awkward and improbable. The ephah, the angel says, contains the whole iniquity of the land. The Hebrew text, *resemblance* (lit. *eye*, fig. *appearance,* Nu. xi. 7; Lev. xiii. 55), is understood to mean (Keil), This is the appearance which the wicked in the whole land will present, after the roll of curses (*vv.* 1-4) has passed over it; they will all, as it were, be concentrated in the ephah. But this explanation is very forced; and it is far better to read, with LXX, *their iniquity* (עונם) for *their eye* (עינם).

a talent of lead. Or, more clearly, **a round plate of lead,** which, as the sequel shows, proved to be the lid or cover of the ephah. As the text stands, the first part of the verse is a parenthesis describing what took place, and the second part continues the angel's words in *v.* 5, describing what he saw, as soon as the circular plate of lead was lifted off the top of the ephah. But probably we should read, with LXX (without the parenthesis), *And behold, a round plate of lead was lifted up; and lo, a woman sitting,* &c. The talent was called a 'round' from its shape.

8. The woman is said to be Wickedness, i. e. she represents and personifies the entire wickedness of the land. As she apparently

the midst of the ephah: and he cast the weight of lead
9 upon the mouth thereof. Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there came forth two women, and the wind was in their wings; now they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah
10 between the earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the
11 ephah? And he said unto me, To build her an house in the land of Shinar: and when it is [a] prepared, she shall be set there [b] in her own place.

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[a] Or, *established* [b] Or, *upon her own base*

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raises herself up, and seeks to escape from the ephah, she is thrust back by the angel, and the heavy leaden top is forced down upon her.

the weight. *Lit.* 'the stone,' stones having been originally used as weights. So Dt. xxv. 13, 15 Heb., Prov. xi. 1 Heb.

9. Two women, with large outspread wings, inflated with the wind, i. e. adapted and ready to travel swiftly, appear, and lift up the ephah, preparatory to carrying it away. No meaning attaches to the number 'two,' any more than to the 'wings' of the women: the ephah, with its heavy cover, would naturally require more than one person to lift it up.

like the wings of a stork. The stork is a migratory bird, with powerful wings, capable of flying over long distances: every spring, on their return to Palestine (Jer. viii. 7), they appear in great numbers flying high up in the sky (Tristram, *NHB.* 246).

10, 11. In answer to his inquiry, the prophet is told that the ephah is to be transported to Babylonia, where it is to find a permanent resting-place. The meaning obviously is, that sin, which has hitherto been so active in Judah and wrought there so much ruin, is henceforth to be banished permanently to Babylonia, the country of Israel's deadly foe, and the proper home of all that is evil.

11. Shin'ar. A Hebrew name of Babylonia, of uncertain origin (Gen. xi. 2; Is. xi. 11 *al.*).

set: i. e. *set down, deposited.*

in her own place. Hardly an improvement upon AV. *upon her own base.* The word used means a *fixed resting-place*: it is used of the *bases* of the ten lavers (1 K. vii. 27), or of the *base* of an altar (Ezr. iii. 3). The ephah, when the 'house' in Babylonia is ready for it, is to be deposited in it, on its proper *stand* or *base.*

And again I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, **6**
there came four chariots out from between [a] two moun-
tains; and the mountains were mountains of brass.
In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second 2
chariot black horses; and in the third chariot white 3
horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled [b] bay horses.

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[a] Or, *the two*

[b] Or, *strong* The word is omitted in the Syriac.

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vi. 1–8. *The eighth vision.* The Four Chariots. The prophet sees four chariots, with horses of different colour in each, coming forth from between two mountains of bronze. They represent the four winds of heaven; and they come forth with their commissions from the presence of the Almighty. They are destined for different quarters of the earth, to check, viz., or to overthrow, any power which might threaten Judah, wherever it might be; and one chariot is commissioned in particular to execute Yahweh's anger upon the 'north' country (Babylonia).

1. two mountains. The Heb. has, **the** *two mountains.* The reference may be to two mountains which the prophet had already noticed in his visions, though he had not before mentioned them in his descriptions. They are to be pictured (*v.* 5) as near the abode of God: Marti compares Enoch xviii. 6–10.

of brass. Rather, **of bronze,**—which, indeed, was what was meant by 'brass,' when AV. was made (Wright's *Bible Word-book*, s. v.).

2, 3. The differently coloured horses in each of the chariots. It does not seem that any significance attaches to the particular colours; they are rather simply intended to distinguish the chariots which were to proceed to different quarters of the earth. At most, black might be chosen with reference to the dark north (*v.* 6).

2. red: i. e. *chestnut*, as i. 8.

3. grisled. Rather, **dappled** or **spotted.** The same word is used in Gen. xxxi. 10, 12 of goats, where it is also misrendered *grisled*. *Grisled* (now spelt *grizzled*) is an archaism, meaning *grey* (Fr. *gris*).

bay. The Heb. word can only be rendered 'strong.' There must be some error in the text: for the descriptions of the horses in *vv.* 2, 3 and *vv.* 6, 7 do not agree, as they should do: the 'red' horses are wanting in *vv.* 6, 7, while the 'dappled strong' ones, which are in one chariot in *v.* 3, are distributed between two chariots in *vv.* 6 *end*, 7: 'strong,' moreover, though tolerable in

4 Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked
5 with me, What are these, my lord? And the angel
answered and said unto me, These are the four [a] winds
of heaven, which go forth from [b] standing before the
6 Lord of all the earth. *The chariot* wherein are the black
horses goeth forth toward the north country; and the
white went forth after them; and the grisled went forth
7 toward the south country. And the [c] bay went forth,
and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through

[a] Or, *spirits* [b] Or, *presenting themselves*

[c] Or, *strong* The Syriac and Aquila have, *red*.

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v. 3, is unsuitable in *v.* 7, where evidently the name of some colour is desiderated. No doubt the Syriac is right in omitting 'strong' in *v.* 3, and in reading 'red' (ארמים) for 'strong' (אמצים) in *v.* 7.

4–6. The explanation of the vision.

5. from standing before. Better, as marg., **from presenting themselves before:** i.e. from appearing before Him, to report themselves, or receive His commands: cf. Jos. xxiv. 1; Job i. 6, ii. 1. For the winds, as Yahweh's agents, executing His behests, cf. Ps. civ. 4 ('Who maketh winds his messengers'), cxlviii. 8. We., Now., Marti, however, adding a letter, read, 'These are going forth *towards* (Dan. viii. 8, xi. 4) the four winds of heaven, from standing,' &c.; in this case, of course, the chariots no longer represent the four winds, though they are still Yahweh's symbolic messengers (cf. i. 8 ff.).

6. toward the north country. Babylonia. See on ii. 6.

after them. Following them into Babylonia, as though this needed *two* chariots, to be dealt with effectually. The Heb. is, however, peculiar; and we expect another direction to be specified. Perhaps (We., Now.) *after them* (אל אחריהם) is a corruption of *to the east country* (אל ארץ הקדם).

grisled. Render, **dappled,** as *v.* 3.

7. the bay. Read, **the red** (*chestnut*), as *v.* 2^a: cf. on *v.* 3.

and sought to go, &c. The red horses display impatience to course through the earth in every direction; and they are commissioned accordingly to do this. The meaning is generally understood to be that no definite direction is assigned to them, in order that they may be ready to attack any new power which may arise to threaten Israel, wherever it may show itself. But again it is difficult to avoid suspecting the text: *v.* 5 implies that the four chariots are intended to go forth towards the four quarters of the earth; and We., Now., Marti may well be right in reading

the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro
through the earth. So they walked to and fro through
the earth. Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, 8
saying, Behold, they that go toward the north country
have quieted my spirit in the north country.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 9
Take of them of the captivity, even of Heldai, of 10

(after 'south country' at the end of *v.* 6) '; and the red went forth *toward the west country.* And they sought to go,' &c. The subject in 'they sought' will now be the horses in all the four chariots: they were all alike impatient to start on their mission; and they are all dispatched accordingly. For 'walk to and fro,' i. e. to patrol, cf. i. 10.

8. The interpreting angel calls the prophet's attention to what has been done by the horses dispatched into the north country.

cried upon me. An archaism for 'cried *to* me,' still current colloquially in Scotland. See the Additional Note on p. 226.

have quieted my spirit, &c., i. e. have pacified my anger ('spirit,' as Jud. viii. 3 RVm., Eccl. x. 4), by pouring it forth upon Babylonia. Cf. for the expression Ez. v. 13 'And my anger shall be accomplished, and I will satisfy (*lit.* 'quiet') my fury upon them, and I will be comforted' (viz. by thus disburdening myself), xvi. 42 'And I will satisfy (*lit.* 'quiet') my fury upon thee . . . and I will be at rest, and will be no more vexed.' For the thought of judgement imminent specially upon Babylonia, the centre of the anti-theocratic power of the world, see ii. 7–9; and cf. v. 11.

9–15. *Historical appendix.* A crown to be made, as it seems, for Zerubbabel: he and Joshua will rule harmoniously side by side in the Messianic future. A deputation from the Jews still in Babylon had just arrived in Jerusalem with gifts, intended probably as a contribution towards the restoration of the Temple; and the prophet is commanded to take from these gifts enough silver and gold to make a crown (or crowns), either—as can hardly be doubted—for Zerubbabel alone, or for Zerubbabel and Joshua, the civil and religious heads of the community (cf. chaps. iii, iv). Zerubbabel will successfully complete the building of the Temple (cf. iv. 9); and he and Joshua will then rule, the one as Messianic king, and the other as priest at his side, in perfect concord with each other.

10. of them of the captivity. Or, **of the gōlā** (the company of exiles). The term regularly applied to the Jews resident in Babylonia (Ez. i. 1; Ezr. i. 11, &c.). Ḥeldai, Tobijah, and Zephaniah formed the deputation.

Tobijah, and of Jedaiah; and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah,
11 whither they are come from Babylon; yea, take *of them* silver and gold, and make [a] crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high

[a] Or, *a crown, and set it*

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and come thou, &c. More exactly, 'and come *thou* (emph.) in that day, and come into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, into which they are come from Babylon,' or, more naturally, 'who are come from Babylon.' The Hebrew, as the literal rendering at once shows, is awkward; the verb *take*, also, at the beginning of the verse, has no object, nor has any 'day' been mentioned to which *in that day* might refer. In view of the difficulties of the passage, though the correction may seem violent, there is much to be said in favour of the proposal (We., Now., Marti) to read (after 'and of Jedaiah'), 'and of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, who are come from Babylon'; אתה ביום ההוא being omitted, ובאת being a corruption of ומאת ('and from'), and ובאת בית being two corrupt repetitions of it.

11. crowns. The Hebrew word is plural; it *may*, however, denote a single 'crown' (RVm.; cf. *v.* 14), the plural referring to the several circlets of which it might be composed. The pronoun after *set* is not expressed in the Hebrew: so of course either *them* or *it* may be supplied. Whether one or two crowns are actually meant must thus depend upon the view taken of the sequel.

upon the head of Joshua, &c. The text here must be in some way or other at fault. In the first place, the words at the end of *v.* 13, 'and the counsel of peace shall be *between them both*,' makes it evident that *two* personages must have been referred to in the preceding verses; and secondly, the 'crown'—or, if there were two crowns, one of them—is evidently intended for the 'Shoot,' or Messianic king (iii. 8), of *vv.* 12, 13, to whom the principal promises here given are addressed, whereas in the text as it stands it is placed on the head of the high-priest Joshua. It seems, therefore, that one of two corrections must be made. We must either (Ewald, Hitz., Stade) read in *v.* 11^b, 'and set them *upon the head of Zerubbabel, and* upon the head of Joshua,' or (We., Now., Smith, Marti) omit *v.* 11^b (from 'and set') altogether, —in either case, at the beginning of *v.* 12, reading 'unto *them*' (i. e. the persons mentioned in *v.* 10) for 'unto *him*.' The crown —or (Ewald) the principal crown—was intended originally for Zerubbabel, upon whom Haggai had already (ii. 23) bestowed Messianic promises, and who Zechariah (see below, comparing

priest; and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the 12
LORD of hosts, saying, Behold, the man [a] whose name
is the [b] Branch; and he shall [c] grow up out of his place,
and he shall build the temple of the LORD: even he 13
shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear

[a] Or, *whose name is the Bud; and it* (or *they*) *shall bud forth under him*

[b] Or, *Shoot* Or, *Sprout* [c] Or, *shoot*

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iv. 9) expected would become the Messianic ruler of the future: since, however, as time went on, the high-priest, and not a descendant of David's line, became actually the supreme authority in Israel, the text was altered in accordance with the history; and either (Ewald) Zerubbabel's name was omitted or (We.) Joshua's name inserted.

the man whose name is (the) **Shoot.** See on iii. 8.

and he will shoot forth out of his place: i. e. he will flourish and prosper (Jer. xxiii. 5), the figure being suggested by the name 'Shoot.' 'Out of his place' is lit. 'from underneath himself,' 'underneath oneself' being a Hebrew idiom for 'where one stands' (see on Hab. iii. 16); cf. Ex. x. 23 'and no one rose up *from underneath himself*' (= *from his place*). The Hebrew is, however, ambiguous, and might also be rendered as on RVm. (so We., Now., Marti); the meaning then being that he will become the founder of a flourishing dynasty (cf. Jer. xxxiii. 15-17, esp. *v.* 17). But it is doubtful whether the prophet looks beyond Zerubbabel himself.

and he shall build: i. e. Zerubbabel; see iv. 9. But the clause is superfluous by the side of the following clause (which, it may be observed, begins with the emphatic והוא 'and *he*'), and is very probably nothing but a faulty anticipation of it.

13. 'And *he* (emph.) shall build Yahweh's Temple; and *he* (again emph.) shall bear majesty.' The word rendered 'majesty' (הוד) denotes properly the majesty of a king: see Jer. xxii. 18 *end* (EVV. 'glory'); Ps. xxi. 5 and civ. 1 (EVV., weakly, 'honour': render rather '*majesty* and state'); 1 Chr. xxix. 25 (EVV. 'majesty').

the temple. This can mean only the literal Temple (cf. *v.* 14^{b}): the explanation (Keil, *al.*) that the spiritual Temple—the community, or Church of God (Eph. ii. 21)—is meant, is inconsistent with the context, besides giving the word 'Temple' a sense unknown to the O. T., and one which it only acquired *after* Eph. ii. 21^{b} had been written (where it comes in naturally as the climax of the Apostle's figure, *vv.* 20, 21^{a}). But no doubt the

the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and [a] he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel
14 of peace shall be between them both. And the [b] crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and [c] to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the

[a] Or, *there shall be* [b] Or, *crown*
[c] Or, *for the kindness of the son &c.*

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prophet does not think here simply of the actual Temple, but of the actual Temple endowed with ideal splendour (Hag. ii. 9), as he thinks also of Joshua and Zerubbabel as ruling in ideal state.

and he shall sit (1 K. ii. 12), &c.: Zerubbabel is pictured as a king ruling in state upon his throne.

and he shall be a priest, &c. This cannot be right: the closing words of the verse, 'between them both,' shows that two persons must have been mentioned previously[1]. The least change that can be adopted must be, therefore, to read with RVm. '*and* **there shall be** *a priest upon his throne,*' with reference to Joshua; but it is more than possible that Joshua was once named here explicitly, and that we should read, with Ew., Stade, We., Now., Smith, and Marti, 'and *Joshua* shall be priest upon his throne [or, with LXX, Stade, We., Now., Smith, Marti, 'shall be priest *on his right hand,*'—'upon his throne' being repeated accidentally by error from the previous line]; and there shall be counsel of peace between them both,' i. e. Joshua will be priest beside Zerubbabel, and there will be complete harmony between them both; the civil and religious heads of the community will consult together harmoniously for the welfare of their people. Are the closing words an indication that rivalries had already begun to spring up between them? 'The (later) hegemony of the priesthood cast its shadow before' (Marti).

14. The crown (or crowns) to be preserved afterwards in the Temple in memory of the donors (*v.* 10).

the crowns. The plural will be right if both Zerubbabel and Joshua were mentioned in *v.* 11, the singular *crown* (RVm.) if there was originally no name in *v.* 11^b, and the 'crown' mentioned in *v.* 11^a was intended really for Zerubbabel (*vv.* 12, 13^a).

Helem. The Syr. has *Ḥeldai,* no doubt rightly: see *v.* 10.

Hen. Apparently a corrupt and mutilated fragment of *Josiah, v.* 10. In the abstract, we might render (cf. RVm.), *and for the favour of the son of Zephaniah,*—with reference to his hospitable

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[1] It is incredible that 'between them both' can refer to one person holding *two offices.*

temple of the LORD. And they that are far off shall 15
come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall
know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.
And *this* shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey
the voice of the LORD your God.

And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, 7

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reception (*v.* 10, as rendered in RV.) of the deputation from Babylonia; but such a rendering is not here probable; Ḥen can only be taken naturally as a proper name, and if so it can scarcely be anything but a corruption of 'Josiah' (*v.* 10).

Zerubbabel and Joshua may be regarded naturally as types of Christ, the Messianic expectations which Zechariah attached to them being fulfilled afterwards, in a larger sense, by Him.

15. The building of the temple will progress rapidly: 'far-off ones,'—Jews from a distance, and perhaps (cf. Hag. ii. 7; Zech. viii. 22) Gentiles as well,—will come and assist in the work; and its completion will be evidence to the people of Judah that the prophet has been sent by Yahweh (cf. ii. 11, iv. 9^{b}). The thought may have been suggested to the prophet by the interest shown in the Temple by the exiles who had sent gifts for it from Babylonia.

build in. Or, 'build at,' i. e. assist in building: the prep., as Neh. iv. 4 Heb. [EVV. iv. 10].

and this shall come to pass, &c. There is no 'this' in the Hebrew. The words must be rendered as in other exactly similar cases (Dt. xi. 13, xxviii. 1; Jer. xvii. 24): **And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently to the voice of Yahweh your God. . .** Some promise must have originally followed; but it has been torn away: the prophecy in its present form ends in the middle of a sentence.

PART III (chs. vii–viii).

Yahweh's promises, and demands, for the future.

'The visions have revealed the removal of the guilt of the land, the restoration of Israel to their standing before God, the revival of the great national institutions, and God's will to destroy the heathen forces of the world. With the Temple built, Israel should again be in the position which she enjoyed before the Exile. Zechariah, therefore, proceeds to exhort the people to put away the fasts which the Exile had made necessary, and address themselves, as of old, to the virtues and duties of the civic life' (G. A. Smith, p. 320). He reminds them how their forefathers, to their cost, had neglected those duties (cf. i. 4-6); but now, if they will observe them faithfully, he assures them of Yahweh's

that the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the
2 fourth *day* of the ninth month, even in Chislev. [a] Now
they of Beth-el had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech,
3 and their men, to intreat the favour of the LORD, *and*
to speak unto the priests of the house of the LORD of
hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the
fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so

[a] Or, *Now* they of *Beth-el, even Sharezer . . . had sent*

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blessing, he describes the felicity which they will enjoy, and he ends with a picture of heathen nations eagerly pressing forward to share their blessings.

vii. 1–3. The occasion of the following prophecy. In 518, two years after the work of rebuilding the Temple had been resumed, a deputation came to Jerusalem to inquire of the priests and prophets there whether the fasts which had been observed during the years of exile should still be continued.

1. Chislev: i. e. Dec.–Jan.

2. The text is highly suspicious, though it cannot be restored with certainty. *Shareẓer* is an Assyrian name (see Is. xxxvii. 38), and must have been given to its bearer in Babylon: it means 'Protect the king,' the name of the deity addressed[1] being either omitted or having dropped out. Not improbably it is concealed in the preceding 'Beth-el'; and we should read, for instance, 'And Belsharéẓer and Regem-melech and his men [so the Heb.] sent to intreat,' &c., or, with greater changes in the Heb., but better sense, 'And Belsharéẓer sent Regem-melech and his men' (We., Now.), or 'And B. and R. sent men' (Cheyne, Marti).

to intreat Yahweh's favour. Whether by supplication (Ex. xxxii. 11; 1 K. xiii. 6; Jer. xxvi. 19); or sacrifice, 1 S. xiii. 12, and probably here.

3. Shall I weep. The 'I' represents the community: the senders were probably men of some position in it.

the fifth month. The tenth of the fifth month was observed as a fast in memory of the burning of Jerusalem by the Chaldaeans in 586 (Jer. lii. 12, 13).

separating myself. Better, *abstaining*, viz. from food and drink.

now so many years? for sixty-eight years, the fourth year of Darius being B. C. 518.

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[1] Cf. Bel-shar-uẓẓur (Belshaẓẓar) 'O Bel, protect (נצר) the king!' Nergal-sharéẓer (Jer. xxxix. 13), i. e. Nergal-shar-uẓẓur (Neriglissar), 'O Nergal, protect the king!'

many years? Then came the word of the LORD of hosts 4
unto me, saying, Speak unto all the people of the land, 5
and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned
in the fifth and in the seventh *month*, even these seventy
years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? And when 6
ye eat, and when ye drink, [a] do not ye eat for yourselves,
and drink for yourselves? *Should ye* not *hear* the words 7
which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets,
when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and

[a] Or, *are not ye they that eat &c.*

Yahweh's answer, which now begins, falls into three parts (*v.* 8 being omitted: see the note), each introduced by the words, *And Yahweh's word came to me*, *vv.* 4–14, viii. 1–17, 18–23.

4–7. Your fasting has had so little reference to Yahweh, that He cares not whether you fast or not: what He demands, as He often told your fathers by the older prophets, is a spiritual service, the service of the heart.

5. and mourned. Rather, **and wailed,**—with loud demonstrations of grief, in the Eastern fashion. This is the regular meaning of *sāphad*: cf. Mic. i. 8 'I will make a wailing like the jackals,' with palpable reference to the cries of the wailers.

in the fifth month. See on *v.* 3.

and in the seventh month. In memory of the murder of Gedaliah, whom Nebuchadnezzar had made governor of Judah, by fanatic Jews at Mizpah (see 2 K. xxv. 23, 25, or more fully Jer. xl. 5, 7, &c., xli. 1, 2).

even. The word (Heb. ו, i. e. 'and') is better omitted.

did ye at all fast unto me? It was a merely external observance, as little expressive of or conducive to the temper in which I delight as your eating and drinking are (*v.* 6). Cf. Is. lviii. 3–5.

6. do ye not, &c. *Lit.* 'are not ye the eaters, and ye the drinkers?' i. e. the act is limited entirely to yourselves, it in no way affects me. Cf. 1 Cor. viii. 8.

7. (Should ye) **not** (hear). This is a good deal to supply; the LXX read preferably, **Are not these the words,** &c. (אלה for את; cf. viii. 16). The meaning is, This,—i. e. Yahweh's indifference to a merely external ceremonial, apart from the moral and spiritual feelings of which it should be the expression,—is the gist of what the older prophets so often preached (e. g. Is. lviii. 6–12, on fasting; also Is. i. 10–17; Am. v. 21–24, &c.).

the former prophets: i. e. the pre-exilic prophets, as in i. 4.

the cities thereof round about her, and the South and
the lowland were inhabited?
8 And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah,
9 saying, Thus hath the LORD of hosts spoken, saying,
Execute true judgement, and shew mercy and com-
10 passion every man to his brother: and oppress not the
widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor;

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was inhabited. *Lit.* 'sat,' in accordance with the idiom explained on ii. 4. So **were inhabited,** at the end of the verse.

the South. Or, **the Negeb,** a district in the south of Judah, often mentioned (cf. Gen. xii. 9 RVm.), the cities of which are enumerated in Jos. xv. 21–32 (see 'NEGEB' in *DB*.).

the lowland. Or, **the Shephelah,** the technical name of another district of Judah (Jos. xv. 33–44), comprising the low hills and flat valley land stretching down towards the Philistine plain in the W. and SW. of Judah (see 'PLAIN' **7** in *DB*.). Cf. Jer. xiii. 19, xxxii. 44, xxxiii. 13.

8–14. A summary of the teaching of the 'former prophets,' *vv.* **9–10,** followed by a description of the manner in which the people turned a deaf ear to it, and were visited by Yahweh in consequence with disaster and exile, *vv.* 11–14.

8, 9. As the text stands, the reference to the teaching of the former prophets is the subject of a fresh revelation from Yahweh. But the connexion of this passage is greatly improved if we adopt, with Now., Smith, and Marti, We.'s illuminative suggestion to omit *v.* 8, as the gloss of a scribe who did not notice that *vv.* 9[b], 10 contained God's teaching by the former prophets: we then get, [7] 'These are the words which Yahweh hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited, &c. . .'; and then the words spoken by them immediately follow, [9] 'Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, Execute true judgement,' &c.

9. Execute true judgement. *Lit.* 'Judge judgement of truth.' The expression *judgement of truth* occurs elsewhere only Ez. xviii. 8; but the principle here inculcated is insisted on repeatedly, from the ancient 'Book of the Covenant,' Ex. xxiii. 6–8, onwards, e. g. Am. v. 12, 16; Is. i. 17, v. 23; Dt. xvi. 19, 20.

shew mercy (or **kindness**) **and compassion,** &c. Cf. Hos. vi. 6; Mic. vi. 8.

10. The oppression of 'the widow, the fatherless, and the stranger' (*lit.* 'the sojourner,' i.e. the foreigner, settled more or less temporarily in Israel, but possessing no legal *status* there) is repeatedly prohibited: Ex. xxii. 21, 22; Dt. xxiv. 17; Is. i. 17; Jer. vii. 6, &c.

nor the poor. Cf. Am. viii. 4; Is. iii. 14–15, x. 2.

and let none of you imagine evil against his brother
in your heart. But they refused to hearken, and [a] pulled 11
away the shoulder, and [b] stopped their ears, that they
should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an 12
adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the
words which the LORD of hosts had sent by his spirit
by the hand of the former prophets: therefore came
there great wrath from the LORD of hosts. And it came 13
to pass that, as he cried, and they would not hear; so
they shall cry, and I will not hear, said the LORD of
hosts; but I will scatter them with a whirlwind among 14

[a] Or, *turned a stubborn shoulder*
[b] Or, *made their ears heavy* See Is. vi. 10.

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imagine evil. Cf. Mic. ii. 1.

11, 12. The obstinate and persistent refusal of the people to listen to these admonitions.

11. refused to attend. Cf. i. 4; Jer. vi. 10, 17, 19, xviii. 18 (Heb.).

pulled away the shoulder. *Lit.* 'gave a stubborn (Dt. xxi. 18) shoulder.' The same phrase in Neh. ix. 29. The figure is taken from an animal which will submit to no yoke upon its neck: cf. Hos. iv. 16 'For like a *stubborn* heifer, Israel *hath been stubborn.*'

stopped. *Lit.* 'made heavy,' i.e. dull, as Is. vi. 10.

12. an adamant stone. Perhaps the diamond,—in any case some very hard stone: cf. Jer. xvii. 1; Ez. iii. 9. Cf. the 'heart of stone' of Ez. xi. 19.

the law. Properly (cf. on Hab. i. 4; Hag. ii. 11) 'direction' proceeding from Yahweh: here in particular of the precepts of civic righteousness and morality, inculcated, for instance, so often in Deuteronomy, and by the prophets. The word is used similarly in Is. i. 10, v. 24. There should be no comma at 'law': both 'the law' and 'the words' are antecedents to 'which.'

by his spirit. Equipping the prophets for their office: cf. Mic. iii. 8; Is. lxi. 1; also Neh. ix. 30.

great wrath: cf. i. 2.

13, 14. The consequences of Yahweh's wrath.

13. would not hear. The Hebrew is simply *heard not.* The answer to 'as he cried,' &c., is given not simply by 'so shall they cry,' but the meaning is, 'so, said Yahweh of hosts, they shall cry, and I will not hear.' Cf. Jer. xxxv. 17: xi. 11; Mic. iii. 4; Ez. viii. 18.

14. but I will scatter them, &c. Continuing Yahweh's all the nations whom they have not known. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the [a] pleasant land desolate.

8 And the word of the LORD of hosts came *to me*,
2 saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with
3 great fury. Thus saith the LORD: I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called The city of truth; and the

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[a] Heb. *land of desire.*

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threat to the fathers, begun in *v.* 13. But it is better, changing one point, to read with Now. and Marti, 'and I scattered them . . . ; and the land was desolate,' &c.

scatter with a whirlwind. In the Hebrew, more emphatically, one word, **whirl away:** so Hos. xiii. 3; Ps. lviii. 9; Job xxvii. 21.

whom they have (had) not known. A favourite expression in Dt. and Jer., especially of foreign gods (as Dt. xi. 28); and, as here, of a foreign nation, Dt. xxviii. 33, 36, and esp. Jer. ix. 16; of a foreign land, Jer. xiv. 18 (RVm.), xvi. 13 *al.*

Thus. In the Hebrew, simply *And.*

after them. When they had left it.

that no man, &c. Cf. Ez. xxxv. 7.

the pleasant land. This rendering is not strong enough: rather, the *desirable* or *precious* (Nah. ii. 9) *land,* on account, viz., of its fertility, Dt. viii. 7-10, &c.: so Jer. iii. 19; Ps. cvi. 24.

viii. A decalogue of promises, each introduced by *Thus saith Yahweh* (*of Hosts*), and each containing some word of brightness and hope for the Jerusalem of the future: Yahweh is again full of jealousy for His people; happy days are in store for it,—if only (*vv.* 16 f.) it will eschew the things that He hates; and its felicity will attract the envy of the nations.

2. Yahweh is full of jealousy for Zion, and of wrath against her heathen foes. *V.* 2^a agrees almost verbally with i. 14^b; with *v.* 2^b cf. i. 15.

3. Yahweh has returned to Zion, and will again take up His abode in it (cf. i. 16, ii. 10): Jerusalem will now become, as Isaiah had promised (i. 26), the 'faithful city,' and the Temple will be sanctified by His presence.

The city of truth. Better, **of faithfulness:** cf. Is. i. 26.

mountain of the LORD of hosts The holy mountain.
Thus saith the LORD of hosts: There shall yet old men 4
and old women [a] dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every
man with his staff in his hand [b] for very age. And the 5
streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing
in the streets thereof. Thus saith the LORD of hosts: 6
If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this
people in those days, should it also be marvellous in
mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts. Thus saith the 7
LORD of hosts: Behold, I will save my people from the
east country, and from the west country: and I will 8

[a] Or, *sit*

[b] Heb. *for multitude of days.*

The holy mountain: sanctified by Yahweh's presence, and also, it is implied, secured thereby against presumptuous foes (cf. Jer. xxxi. 23; Ob. 17; Joel iii. 17).

4, 5. The happiness and long life (cf. Is. lxv. 20) of the future inhabitants of Jerusalem. An 'immortal picture, old men and women sitting in the sun, boys and girls playing in all the open places' (Smith, pp. 324 f.); perhaps (*ibid.*) drawn as a contrast to the rough and hard life of the restored community, which gave little encouragement to marriage, and allowed few to reach gray hairs.

4. yet. For they were hardly there at present.

dwell. More picturesquely as RVm., **sit**: cf. 1 Macc. xiv. 9.

streets. Broad places: see on Nah. ii. 4; so *v.* 5 (twice).

6. With Yahweh nothing is impossible: though what is here promised should seem marvellous even to those who witness it, Yahweh will nevertheless bring it to pass.

be marvellous. Or, *extraordinary.* The word (meaning properly *to be exceptional*) is rendered in the similar passages, Gen. xviii. 14, Jer. xxxii. 17, 27 *be difficult*, or *hard.*

the remnant of this people. As Hag. i. 12, 14, of the colony of restored exiles.

in those days. In the days when the promises now given will have been fulfilled.

7-8. Yahweh will bring back those of His people who are still scattered in different parts of the world, and they will dwell in Jerusalem, at once loyal to Him, and under His protection.

I will save. Cf. Jer. xxx. 10, 11.

from the east country, &c. Cf. Is. xliii. 5 (where, however, the north and the south follow in *v.* 6). The opposite and

bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jeru-
salem; and they shall be my people, and I will be their
9 God, in truth and in righteousness. Thus saith the
LORD of hosts: Let your hands be strong, ye that hear
in these days these words from the mouth of the pro-
phets, which were in the day that the foundation of the
house of the LORD of hosts was laid, even the temple,
10 that it might be built. For before those days there
was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither
was there any peace to him that went out or came in

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distant quarters of the earth represent, of course, the earth generally: cf. Ps. l. 1, cxiii. 3; Is. lix. 19; Mal. i. 11; Mt. viii. 11.

and they shall be to me a people, and I will be to them a God. The phrase, implying close and mutual relationship, as often in Jer. (vii. 23, xxiv. 7, xxxi. 33) and Ez. (xi. 20, xxxvi. 28, xxxvii. 23, 27); cf. Hos. ii. 23.

in truth and in righteousness. Cf. Hos. ii. 19, 20; Is. xlviii. 1 *end*.

9–13. Let the people take courage! the anxious times are past; fruitful seasons and prosperity are in store for them. The passage is spoken with evident reference to Hag. i. 6–11, ii. 15–19.

9. Let your hands be strong: i. e. Be of good courage: Jud. vii. 11; Is. xxxv. 3 *al.*

ye that hear, &c.: suggesting a ground why they should feel encouraged; they have heard the reassuring words of the 'prophets,' Haggai and Zechariah.

which were in: LXX, Pesh., Smith, 'which have been *from*' (מיום for ביום).

the day that, &c.: i. e. the time, two years before, when the building of the Temple was resumed (Hag. i. 14 f., ii. 18; cf. Ezr. v. 1 f.).

10–12. The improvement which has already begun is a ground of hope and encouragement for the future.

10. The three evils which prevailed before the building of the Temple was resumed: scarcity of food, the interference of unfriendly neighbours (cf. Ezr. iv. 1), and internal dissensions.

hire. Or, **wages.** The crops were so scanty that there was little or no return for the labour of either man or beast in the fields: see Hag. i. 6 *end*, 10, 11, ii. 16, 17, 19.

that went out or came in: viz. at the beginning or end of any undertaking (Dt. xxviii. 6, xxxi. 2). Cf. 2 Chr. xv. 5.

because of the adversary: for I set all men every one
against his neighbour. But now I will not be unto 11
the remnant of this people as in the former days, saith
the LORD of hosts. For *there shall be* the seed of peace; 12
the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give
her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and
I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all
these things. And it shall come to pass that, as ye 13
were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and

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and (not 'for') **I set,** &c. A third evil: internal dissensions.

11. But now Yahweh will deal with His people differently; and the land will again be blessed with fertility.

I will not be, &c. Rather, **not as in the former days am I unto,** &c.: there is no verb expressed in the Hebrew.

the remnant of this people: as *v.* 6, the returned exiles.

the former days: i. e. the days before the building of the Temple was resumed.

12. For (there shall be) **the seed of peace,** &c. I. e. for the *produce* or *harvest* (Job xxxix. 12) of peace will now be assured, the following clauses describing in what this produce or harvest is to consist. But the text is suspicious: 'dew' cannot well be included under 'seed'; and such an abrupt sentence is not in accordance with usual Hebrew style. It is best, probably, to read with We., Smith, Now. (ed. 2), Marti, 'For I will sow peace' (אזרעה שלום for זרע השלום: the LXX, though paraphrasing, have a verb, 'I will show'). The figure may have been suggested by Hos. ii. 23 (though the object there is not 'peace').

and the earth shall yield her increase. A standing phrase, found six times besides: Lev. xxvi. 4, 20; Dt. xi. 17; Ez. xxxiv. 27; Ps. lxvii. 6, lxxxv. 12.

the vine shall yield her fruit, &c. In contrast to the late bad seasons, Hag. i. 10, 11, ii. 16, 17.

13. As, on account of the unprecedented misfortunes which befell them, they were once regarded by the heathen as cursed of God (Jer. xxiv. 9, xlii. 18), so that men used their names, as types of wretchedness, in imprecations (cf. Jer. xxix. 22), so now they will be so blessed by God that their names will be used, as types of happiness, in benedictions (cf. Gen. xlviii. 20 RVm.).

O house of Judah, and house of Israel. Though the prophet is addressing actually (*v.* 12) only the restored 'remnant,' he here enlarges his outlook, so as to embrace in it not only the tribe of Judah generally (including those still in exile), but the

house of Israel, so will I save you, and ye shall be
14 a blessing: fear not, *but* let your hands be strong. For
thus saith the LORD of hosts: As I thought to do evil
unto you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith
15 the LORD of hosts, and I repented not; so again have I
thought in these days to do good unto Jerusalem and to
16 the house of Judah: fear ye not. These are the things
that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth with his
neighbour; [a] execute the judgement of truth and peace
17 in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your
hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath:
for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD.

18 And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me,

[a] Heb. *judge truth and the judgement of peace.*

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tribes of the northern kingdom as well. The prospect is an *ideal* one, such as is often drawn by the prophets: Jer. iii. 12-15, 18, xxxi. 4-9, 27; Ez. xxxvii. 15 ff.; Is. xi. 12-14; Zech. x. 6, 7.

a blessing. Both blessed yourselves (Gen. xii. 2: cf. Ps. xxi. 6 RVm.), and also an example, or type, of blessedness, in the eyes of others.

let your hands be strong. The paragraph ends with the same word of encouragement as that with which it began (*v.* 9).

14–17. The people have nothing to fear, if only (*vv.* 16-17) they observe the moral conditions which Yahweh imposes.

14, 15. to do evil . . . to do good. Contrast Dt. xxviii. 63; Jer. xxxi. 28.

16, 17. Yahweh's moral demands are substantially the same as those laid upon the forefathers, vii. 9 f.

16. Speak . . . truth. Cf. Ps. xv. 2.

judge truth, and the judgement of peace (RVm.): i. e. judgement leading to peace, as opposed to unrighteous judgement, such as leads only to dissatisfaction and discord.

in your gates. Or, *gateways*, with seats along the sides, where persons often met for conversation or business, and where justice was also often administered: see e. g. Dt. xxv. 7; Ruth iv. 1, 11; Am. v. 15; Is. xxix. 21; Job v. 4; Ps. cxxvii. 5.

17. and let none of you, &c. Nearly identical with vii. 10^{b}.

no false oath. Cf. v. 4.

18–19. Now at last comes the direct answer to the original question (vii. 3), out of which the entire prophecy arose: Do

saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts: The fast of the 19
fourth *month*, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of
the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the
house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts;
therefore love truth and peace. Thus saith the LORD 20
of hosts: *It shall* yet *come to pass*, that there shall come
peoples, and the inhabitants of [a] many cities: and the 21
inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying, Let
us go speedily to intreat the favour of the LORD, and to
seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many 22
peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD
of hosts in Jerusalem, and to intreat the favour of the
LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts: In those days 23
it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of

[a] Or, *great*

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what is just and right, and the felicity which you will then enjoy will cause the sad memories of the past to be forgotten. The answer embraces two other fast-days, besides those mentioned in vii. 5.

19. On the ninth day of the *fourth* month, a breach was made in the walls of Jerusalem, Zedekiah and his men of war fled, and the Chaldaeans entered the city (2 K. xxv. 3–5 = Jer. lii. 6–8); on the tenth day of the *fifth* month, the city, palace, and temple were burnt (Jer. lii. 12, 13); in the *seventh* month, the governor Gedaliah was murdered (above, on vii. 5); on the tenth day of the *tenth* month (a year and a half before the day on which the breach in the walls was made) the siege of Jerusalem began (2 K. xxv. 1 = Jer. lii. 4).

cheerful feasts. Better, *cheerful* **seasons** (Zeph. iii. 18).

so love truth and peace (cf. *v.* 16^b). In order, viz., that this happy change may come to you.

20–22. So great will be Judah's felicity that the sight of it will attract many and mighty nations to Jerusalem, to seek Yahweh's favour there.

21. Let us go. They exhort one another to make the pilgrimage: cf. Is. ii. 3 = Mic. iv. 2. There is no 'speedily' in the Hebrew: the *inf. abs.* suggests emphasis, but not (at least directly) speed.

to intreat the favour. Cf. on vii. 2.

22. many peoples and strong nations. Cf. Mic. iv. 3.

23. Ten men will press round a single Jew: so eager will the all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.

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nations be, not merely to worship the God of Israel, but to join themselves to Israel (cf. ii. 11; Is. xiv. 1^b, lvii. 6 f.), because, viz., God is 'with' Israel, and blesses it with prosperity (cf. Gen. xxi. 22, xxvi. 28 f., xxxix. 2, 23). Cf. Is. xlv. 14.

languages. In the late sense of 'peoples speaking different languages,' as Is. lxvi. 18; Dan. iii. 4, 7, 28, &c.: so Rev. v. 9, vii. 9, x. 11 *al.*

Additional Note on Zech. vi. 8.

'Cried upon' here, in the sense of 'called to,' is an isolated and somewhat curious archaism, inherited through the Geneva Version (1560), and the Great Bible (1539), from Coverdale (1534). It was presumably current in Old English; but in the instances given by Murray (1300 *Cursor Mundi* 6139; 1400 *Destruction of Troy* 6504; 1532 More, *Works*, ed. 1557, p. 396^a 'he cryed upon them to do penaunce'; and others) it has the force of *call on* or *appeal to.* It is still, Dr. Hastings tells me, used colloquially in the sense of 'call to' in Scotland: 'A mother will say, "Your father's in the garden, *cryupon* him to come in."' And Jos. Wright, in his *Dialect Dictionary*, quotes two examples of it in the same sense from Scott: *Border Minstrelsy* (1802), i. 144, ed. 1806, or ii. 8, ed. 1848 (in 'Jamie Telfer'), 'But fye gar cry on Willie my son,' and *Redgauntlet*, Letter xii, towards the end, 'If ony body stops ye, cry on me.'

ZECHARIAH IX–XIV

INTRODUCTION

ZECHARIAH ix–xiv falls into two main parts (though it is doubtful whether each part forms a single continuous prophecy), viz. (1) ix–xi, xiii. 7–9; (2) xii. 1—xiii. 6, xiv.

Contents of the two parts.

(1) (*a*) ix. *Establishment of the Messianic kingdom.* Yahweh's judgement falls upon Syria, Phoenicia, and the Philistines (*vv.* 1–8): their depopulated territory is incorporated in the Messianic kingdom: the Messianic king enters his capital in triumph (*vv.* 9–10); the Israelites still in exile, having vanquished the Greeks, return to their own land, to enjoy there the blessings of peace (*vv.* 11–17).

(*b*) x. 1–2. *Ask help of Yahweh, not of the teraphim or diviners!* An exhortation to pray for rain to Yahweh, and not to expect it from teraphim and diviners: trust in them leads only to misfortune.

(*c*) x. 3–12. *The fall of the godless foreign tyrants.* Yahweh will visit His flock (people), free them from their foreign rulers, and appoint them native rulers of their own (*vv.* 3, 4). Endued with new strength, they will thereupon vanquish their foes; the exiled Ephraimites will return; Egypt and Assyria will be humbled; and the restored nation will glory in its God (*vv.* 5–12).

(*d*) xi. 1–3. A fire devours the cedars of Lebanon; and the oaks of Bashan will soon share the same fate: shepherds bewail their desolated pastures, and lions roar because their lairs along the Jordan are destroyed. Perhaps a figurative description of the downfall of heathen rulers.

(*e*) xi. 4–17; xiii. 7–9. *The people's rejection of the good shepherd, the substitution of a worthless shepherd, and its consequences for both.* Israel has been the prey of selfish shepherds (i.e. rulers), who have made traffic with it ruthlessly. The prophet is therefore commissioned to enact the part of a good shepherd, and rule the people on Yahweh's behalf: but they resent his authority, so he leaves them to their fate (*vv.* 4-14). After this, in order to exhibit the consequences which their rejection of Yahweh will entail, he assumes the character of a worthless shepherd, who will plunder the people for his own aggrandizement, but who will eventually meet with a just retribution (*vv.* 15-17) : his flock will be dispersed ; and only a remnant, purified by further trial, will be preserved to form the faithful people of God (xiii. 7-9). On the probable meaning of the allegory see the notes, esp. p. 253 f.

(2) xii. 1—xiii. 6, xiv. *The deliverance and glorious future of Jerusalem.*—(*a*) xii. 1—xiii. 6. The deliverance of Jerusalem from the attack of the heathen, its penitence, and its purification from all sin and uncleanness. The prophet sees an assembly of nations advancing against Jerusalem : but Yahweh smites them with a sudden panic, the country folk of Judah are first victorious, and then they assist in saving the capital (*vv.* 1-9). After this triumph, the whole nation, every family by itself, from the noblest downwards, holds a great lamentation over a martyr 'whom they have pierced' (*vv.* 10-14). Henceforth a fountain for purification from sin is permanently opened in Jerusalem (xiii. 1) ; and all idolatry and degraded prophecy are exterminated from the land (xiii. 2-6).

(*b*) xiv. The deliverance of Jerusalem from the heathen, and its elevation into a centre of monotheism for the world. Another assault upon Jerusalem is here described. The nations this time *capture* the city ; and half of its population is taken into captivity (*v.* 1 f.). Yahweh next appears, in order to fight against the assailants, and rescue the remainder : He stands upon the Mount of Olives, which is rent in sunder beneath Him, and through the chasm the fugitives escape (*vv.* 3-5). Thereupon the Messianic age commences : the light is perpetual, and the air serene ; the territory of Judah becomes a fertile plain, Jerusalem alone retaining its former elevation, conspicuous from afar, the goal of the nations' pilgrimages, and holy entirely to Yahweh (*vv.* 6-21).

That Zechariah, the author of chs. i-viii, should be also the author of either chs. ix-xi, xiii. 7-9, or xii, xiii. 1-6, xiv, cannot be said to be probable, even upon internal grounds. Zechariah uses a different phraseology, evinces different interests, and moves in a different circle of ideas from those which prevail in chs. xii-xiv.

Thus Zechariah is peculiarly fond of the confirmatory formula, '(Thus) saith Yahweh' (twenty-three times), and 'came the word of Yahweh unto . . .' (eight times); in xi–xiv we have the former only in xi. 4, the latter not at all; the parenthetic 'saith Yahweh' is also much more frequent in i–viii than in ix–xiv: on the other hand, 'in that day' (of the future), which occurs seventeen times in xii–xiv, occurs thrice only in i–viii (ii. 11, iii. 10, [vi. 10]), and only once in ix–xi (ix. 16).

In i–viii the circumstances of the author's lifetime, and the objects of his interest—the Temple, the affairs of the restored community, Judah's prospects for the future—bulk largely: in ix–xiv the circumstances and interests of the author are very different: there is nothing about the restoration of the Temple, or about Joshua and Zerubbabel; but we read of the evil rulers, foreign and native alike, who maltreat their subjects, and enrich themselves at their expense. Zechariah's pictures of the Messiah and the Messianic age are coloured quite differently from those of either ix–xi or xii–xiv (contrast iii. 8, vi. 12 f. with ix. 9 f.; and viii with xiv); and the prospects of the nation are also different: in Zechariah the outlook is one of security and peace (i. 17, 21, ii. 9–11, iii. 10, viii. 3–8, 12), in xii. 2 ff., xiv. 2 ff., war and siege are imminent, and only when these have been passed through, and Jerusalem has been captured and plundered (xiv. 2), will Judah's salvation be secured (xiv. 6 ff.). And if (see below) ix–xiv are not earlier than the Greek age, Zechariah's authorship is upon chronological grounds impossible.

When, however, we endeavour, by means of internal evidence, to fix the date of these prophecies, we are met by a difficulty. Especially ix–xi, xiii. 7–9 contains passages, some of which seem to point to a *pre*-exilic date, while others point to a *post*-exilic date. Thus, on the one hand, the kingdom of the ten tribes is spoken of in terms implying apparently that it *still* exists (ix. 10, xi. 14), Assyria and Egypt are mentioned side by side (x. 10, 11), just as in Hosea (vii. 11 *al.*); the teraphim and diviners (x. 1 f.) have been thought to point to a date before rather than after the Exile (but see Mal. iii.

5); the nations threatened in ix. 1–7 are those prominent in the age of Amos (cf. Am. i. 3, 6, 9). On the strength of these facts, many of the older critics, Ewald, Hitzig, and others, assigned ch. ix to the end of the reign of Jeroboam II, ch. x to a somewhat later date, *v.* 10 alluding to the deportation of the inhabitants of N. and N.E. Israel by Tiglath-pileser in 734 (2 K. xv. 29), and xi. 4–17 being interpreted as a symbolical description of Yahweh's rejection of the kingdom of the ten tribes in the troubles which followed the death of Jeroboam II. Upon this view the author would be an older contemporary of Isaiah.

On the other hand, the prophecy also contains passages which appear to imply a *post*-exilic date: ix. 11 f. and x. 6–9 seem to presuppose the captivity of Ephraim (B. C. 722); in ix. 8 it is said that no oppressor shall *any more* pass through Jerusalem; and in ix. 13 the Greeks are mentioned, not as a distant, unimportant people, such as they would be in the eighth century B.C., but as a *world*-power, and as Israel's most formidable antagonist, the victory over whom inaugurates the Messianic age. This position, however, was only attained by the Greeks after the overthrow of the Persian empire at Issus, in Cilicia, by Alexander the Great, B. C. 333.

Upon the whole, the arguments in favour of a post-exilic date preponderate. Not only is the manner in which the Greeks are mentioned in ix. 13 a grave objection to a pre-exilic date, but the portrait of the Messianic king seems to be *original* in Isaiah, so that it is scarcely possible to regard ix. 9 f. as earlier than Isaiah; and inasmuch as there are clear indications in some parts (as ix. 11, 12, xi. 4–17) that the writer for some reason veils his meaning, and speaks allegorically, a presumption arises that he may do the same elsewhere. And so the terms 'Ephraim' and 'the house of Joseph' may be explained as symbolical designations of the members of the ten tribes still in exile (the Diaspora), whose return was anticipated by the prophets long after 722 (Jer. iii. 12, xxxi. 4 ff.; Ez. xxxvii. 16 ff.); while 'Assyria,' the name of the country to which, and the people by whom, Ephraim was carried into exile, may have been used to denote the lands belonging geographically to the ancient Assyria, or their present owners, whether the Persians (cf. Ezr. vi. 22), or Alexander (if x. 10, 11 was written during his victorious campaigns, B.C. 333–323), or his successors on the throne of Syria, the Seleucidae.

If, however, we ask more particularly to what date in the Greek period the prophecy is to be assigned, it is impossible to give any confident answer: for our knowledge of Jewish history from 333 to *c.* 175 B.C. is too meagre to allow us to determine what the events alluded to in the prophecy are. There were, however, more occasions than one, in the half-century following the battle of Issus in 333, which, so far as we can see, might have given rise to such a prophecy.

Alexander himself, having, in 332, taken Tyre after a seven months' siege, marched along the coast of Palestine on his way to Egypt, spending two months on the way in the reduction of Gaza. There followed the ten years of Alexander's wonderful career of conquest in the East. After his death at Babylon in 323, his empire, from Macedon to the Indus, became the prey of his generals' ambitions; and Coele-Syria and Palestine, the debatable border-land between Syria and Egypt, were repeatedly invaded by rival armies and repeatedly changed hands. Syria was originally allotted to Laomedon; but Ptolemy Lagi (who had secured Egypt) in 320 sent an expedition through Palestine (in the course of which he is said to have surprised Jerusalem on a Sabbath), and annexed Syria by force of arms. In 318 Eumenes, Alexander's former secretary, who had received the satrapy of Cappadocia, easily wrested one city after another in Palestine from Ptolemy's garrisons, but was obliged to abandon them in consequence of his fleet deserting to Antigonus. In 315 Antigonus (the general who had obtained Phrygia) laid siege to Tyre, took Joppa and Gaza, and in 314, after a fifteen months' siege, reduced Tyre, and so gained possession of Palestine. In 312, however, Ptolemy defeated Antigonus' son, Demetrius, at a great battle fought near Gaza, the result of which was that he recovered Palestine as far as Tyre. But he did not retain it for long: in 311, hearing that Antigonus was advancing against him with a large army from Phrygia, he evacuated it, destroying on his retreat Acco, Joppa, Samaria, and Gaza. From 311 to 302 Palestine remained in the hands of Antigonus. In 302, however, it was again recovered by Ptolemy. After the battle of Ipsus, in Phrygia, in 301, in which Antigonus was defeated and slain by Seleucus, Ptolemy, under protest from Seleucus, still retained Palestine. In 297 or 296 Demetrius appears to have taken Samaria [1].

There were also, during all these years, numerous wars between the former generals of Alexander in other parts of Asia. Amid times such as these, a prophet might well have been moved to attach his thoughts about the future to imagery such as that of the invasion of Palestine from the north in ix. 1–8, or the assault of nations upon Jerusalem in xii. 1–9, or its capture by them in xiv. 1–2, and so Stade, in his elaborate study on Zech. ix–xiv in the *Zeitschr. für die alttest. Wissenschaft.* for 1881, 1882, dates the prophecy (1882, pp. 293 f., 305) between 306 and 278. G. A. Smith (p. 461) agrees that this date is probable. Kuiper (*Zach. ix–xiv*, Utrecht, 1894, pp. 134 f., 160 f.) thinks chs. ix–x may have been written in 332 during Alexander's siege of Tyre, considering ix. 5–8 to be a prediction of his ensuing march towards Egypt, and understanding the two chapters generally as giving expression to the hopes of deliverance and restoration aroused by his successes; xi, xiii. 7–9 he thinks was written somewhat later, after these hopes had been disappointed, and the people had shown themselves unresponsive to Yahweh's demands; xii. 1—xiii. 6 and xiv describe the hopes cherished still later by the same prophet. This view is plausible: whether it is right is more than we can tell. Nowack declines to say more than that the prophecy belongs to the Greek period.

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[1] Stade, in the study mentioned above, 1882, pp. 301–4; Niese, *Gesch. der Griech. u. Maked. Staaten*, i. (1893), pp. 230, 275 f., 283 f., 295–300, 349, 352, 355 n. 6; ii. (1899), pp. 124 f.

The date, in fact, cannot be fixed definitely till we know who the 'three shepherds' cut off 'in one month' are (xi. 8). Marti (see p. 254) places the prophecy as late as B.C. 160; but if this had been the date we should have expected the Hebrew style to be of a later type than it is.

Chs. xii. 1—xiii. 6, xiv (which differ from ix. 1 ff. in making no mention of the northern kingdom) were assigned by Ewald and other older critics to a prophet living shortly before the close of the kingdom of Judah, under either Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, or Zedekiah, the descriptions in xii. 2 ff. and xiv. 1 ff. being supposed to refer to the approaching capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldaeans in 586, and to the escape (xiv. 2^b) of a fraction of the inhabitants. But a closer study of the contents of the prophecy reveals indications, too clear to be mistaken, of its post-exilic origin. The terms in which the foe is spoken of in xii. 2 ff., xiv. 1 ff. are very different from those used by Jeremiah or Ezekiel of the Chaldaeans: there is an ideal or imaginative element in the descriptions, showing that the prophet has not actual enemies in view, but that he is following Ezekiel (chs. xxxviii–xxxix) in picturing an imaginary attack of nations upon Jerusalem in the future. Such a feature has no organic connexion with the prophet's own times, but is eschatological. The prophets of the Chaldaean age dwell constantly upon the iniquities of the people: the burden of these chapters is not the need of repentance, or the judgement upon sin, but deliverance and future blessedness. The independent position assigned to the 'house of Levi,' as a whole, beside the 'house of David' (xii. 13; cf. *vv.* 8, 10, 12, xiii. 1) is unlike the representations of the earlier period: on the other hand, it would harmonize with post-exilic relations, when the family of David was reduced in prestige, and the priestly tribe possessed great influence in Jerusalem, the high-priest being head of the state. Hence there is no sufficient reason for attributing xii—xiii. 6, xiv to a substantially different age from ix–xi, xiii. 7–9.

Whether the six chapters are all by one hand is a difficult question, which can hardly be answered with certainty. The chapters, no doubt, all move in the same general circle of ideas: but there are at the same time considerable differences between them.

Thus in xi. 4-17, xiii. 7-9 the figure of the shepherds is the same as in x. 3, but it is worked out in a different and highly original manner; the outlook into the future in xi. 17, xiii. 7-9 is very different from that of ix. 9-17, x. 4-12, as it is also from that of xii. 1—xiii. 6: Ephraim, who is so prominent in ix-x, appears nowhere in xi-xiv, not even in the pictures of the future: the 'shepherds,' also, whether of x. 3 or of xi. 4-17, xiii. 7, are not to be found in xii. 1—xiii. 6, xiv: xiv. 1-5 is parallel in general thought to xii. 1-9, but again there are great differences; for whereas in xii. 1 ff. the assailants are dispersed before Jerusalem, in xiv. 1 f. they enter and spoil the city, and half its inhabitants go into exile: xiv. 4 f., 12-15, also, are very different from anything in xii. 3-9; and xiii. 8 f., again, differs from each of these.

Some of these differences (e.g. those between ix-x and xi. 4-17, xiii. 7-9) might no doubt be accounted for by the fact that the prophecies, even though they may be the work of the same author, were not written by him at the same time, and do not reflect the same historical situation (so Kuiper). The question must be left an open one. Stade, Marti, and G. A. Smith, though they allow that unity of authorship cannot be proved, think the differences, in view of the plastic character of the eschatological material, not far-reaching enough to imply a difference of author: Nowack, on the other hand, is of opinion that the phenomena presented by the chapters point to the conclusion that they consist of four distinct prophecies (ix. 1—xi. 3; xi. 4-17, xiii. 7-9; xii. 1—xiii. 6; xiv), the work of four different authors.

The prophecies contained in Zech. ix-xiv are thus suggested in part (ix. 1-8; x. 3 f.; xi. 4 ff.; xii. 5 and 7 (rivalry between Judah and Jerusalem); xii. 10) by the circumstances of the time, though we are not in a position to say definitely what the circumstances alluded to are.

Except, however, in xi. 4–14 (15–17?), which has a character of its own, the writer does not deal so largely with his own present, as the prophets generally do. He does not, like the older prophets (e. g. Is. i, v), attack the moral or social abuses of his time, or denounce religious backsliding, or call to repentance; he lives in the future, and we only learn indirectly, or incidentally (e. g. x. 2, xiii. 2–6), what the faults of his contemporaries are, or what reforms he would introduce among them. In xii. 2 f., xiv. 2 f., 14, the assault of 'all' nations is connected loosely with the present; it is thus (p. 233), though expected to take place shortly, an eschatological trait. In the representations given in them of the future kingdom of God, the prophecies consist largely of re-affirmations, in form adapted to the age in which they were written, of characteristic elements of older prophecies—victory over foes, Ephraim restored, the advent of the age of godliness (xiii. 9), felicity, and peace (ix. 10, 17, x. 4–12, xii. 6, &c.), the removal of idolatry and spurious prophecy (xiii. 2–6), and purification from sin (xiii. 1). Ch. xiv, moreover, anticipates a time when monotheism will prevail throughout the world, and all nations will serve Yahweh,—with the limitation, however, that the thought is expressed under the forms of the Jewish dispensation, which even the most catholic of the prophets could not conceive as entirely abolished, Jerusalem the religious centre of the world, the feast of Booths observed, and other ceremonial institutions in force (xiv. 9 f., 16, 20 f.). The ideal of Zech. ix–xiv is, in one word (Marti), 'a Judaized world-empire, with the Prince of Peace ruling in Jerusalem.'

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS.

A^1, **A**^{2}, **A**^{3}, **A**^{4}	Four anonymous Prophecies, perhaps the work of four distinct Prophets.

ZECHARIAH IX—XIV

9 [A^{1}] The [a] burden of the word of the LORD upon the land of Hadrach, and Damascus *shall be* its resting place:

[a] Or, *oracle*

ix–xi, xiii. 7–9. This prophecy falls into two main parts: (1) ix–x a symbolic picture of the overthrow of the heathen, and establishment of the kingdom of God; (2) xi. 4–14, xiii. 7–9 Israel's misgovernment by certain evil 'shepherds,' and the consequences for both it and them. The interpretation of xi. 1–3 is uncertain (see the notes). As shown in the Introduction, the prophecy is almost certainly later than B. C. 333, the year of Alexander's victory over the Persians at Issus, and reflects some part, or parts, of the anxious and often troubled years which began then for Palestine: but our very meagre knowledge of the internal history of Judah during this period (till *c.* 175) prevents us from fixing the date more precisely.

ix. Establishment of the Messianic kingdom.

1–8. Yahweh's judgement upon Syria, Phoenicia, and the Philistines, enabling the depopulated territory to be made a province in the Messianic kingdom (*v.* 9 ff.). The tide of invasion sweeps on from the North, over Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine, destroying all before it (*vv.* 1–6); the few survivors are cleansed from their iniquities, and incorporated in Judah, which is protected by its God (*vv.* 7, 8).

1. The oracle (or **utterance**: see on Nah. i. 1) **of Yahweh's word.** A peculiar combination, recurring only xii. 1, Mal. i. 1; see p. 285 *n.* Here the expression is the more peculiar, from what is elsewhere the title of a prophecy forming part of a sentence. Stade and Marti, supposing 'Yahweh' to have fallen out, would read, 'The oracle of Yahweh's word. Yahweh is in the land of Ḥadrach, and Damascus is his resting place' (Ps. cxxxii. 8), i. e. Yahweh is in these two countries, and holds them, as conquests, for His people (cf. *v.* 10^{b}). For the idea, if the text be kept as it is, of Yahweh's word (of judgement) 'resting,' or alighting, upon a country, cf. Is. ix. 8.

Hadrach. The name of a country mentioned in the Assyrian Inscriptions, sometimes beside Damascus and Hamath, sometimes beside Ẓobah, Ẓemar and Arḳa (Gen. x. 17), and hence certainly

for [a] the eye of man and of all the tribes of Israel is
toward the Lord: and Hamath also which bordereth 2
thereon: Tyre and Zidon, [b] because she is very wise.
And Tyre did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up 3

[a] Or, *the Lord hath an eye upon men and upon all the tribes of Israel*

[b] Or, *though*

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somewhere on the N. of Palestine,—in the map at the end of *KAT.*[3] placed between Hamath and Riblah.

for the eye, &c. The rendering of RV., though unexceptionable grammatically, cannot be right: for the sense which it yields is incongruous with the context. If the text is correct, RVm. must be followed, the meaning then being that Yahweh has an eye upon all mankind to render to every one according to his doings (cf. Jer. xxxii. 19: in *v.* 20, also, Israel and 'men' generally are opposed as here). The obj. gen. ('eye of man' = 'eye upon man') is, however, forced; and perhaps we should read, with Klost., Marti, 'For to Yahweh belong *the cities* of Aram (Syria) and all the tribes of Israel' (ערי ארם for עין אדם). The 'tribes of Israel' are mentioned because, as 'Ephraim' in the sequel shows (*v.* 10 &c.), the writer has here in view the nation in its ideal completeness.

2. Hamath, Tyre, and Zidon, also, will now become part of Yahweh's domain. The verse carries on either 'and Damascus' in *v.* 1, or, if Klost.'s emendation be adopted, 'the cities of Aram,' &c.

thereon: i. e. on Damascus. **Hămāth** (now *Hamā*) was an important city, with its own king, often mentioned in the Assyrian Inscriptions, and also in the O. T. esp. as fixing the ideal N. limit of Israelitish territory (Nu. xxxiv. 8; Ez. xlvii. 17; cf. 1 K. viii. 65, Am. vi. 14). It was some distance to the N. of Lebanon, and about 120 miles N. of Damascus. It is still a place of considerable size.

she is. Read probably, with LXX, **they are** (חכמו for חכמה).

very wise: viz., as *v.* 3 explains, in the worldly arts of constructing fortifications and amassing wealth. Cf. Ez. xxviii. 3.

3, 4. Tyre, in spite of its strength and wealth, is doomed by Yahweh to destruction. Tyre, after a seven months' siege, was taken by Alexander in 332, and its inhabitants were either slain or sold into slavery. If the prophecy was really written as early as Kuiper supposes (p. 232) this will be the approaching conquest of Tyre referred to.

3. a strong hold. Better, **fortifications**; properly, *an enclosure* or *enclosing wall.* In the Hebrew (*māẓōr*) there is a play upon Tyre (Heb. *Ẓōr*).

silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.
4 Behold, the Lord will dispossess her, and he will smite
[a] her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with
5 fire. Ashkelon shall see it, and fear; Gaza also, and
shall be sore pained; and Ekron, for her expectation shall
be ashamed: and the king shall perish from Gaza, and
6 Ashkelon shall not be inhabited. And [b] a bastard shall

[a] Or, *the sea which is her rampart* · Or, *her rampart into the sea*

[b] Or, *a bastard race*

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heaped up, &c. With allusion to the gains made in trade. 'Dust' and 'mire' are figures of abundance (Job xxvii. 16). For a graphic picture of the commerce of Tyre, see Ez. xxvii.

4. power. Or, *substance, riches*; see Ez. xxviii. 4, 5, where the same word is thrice so rendered. Or, if חיל were taken, as it very well might be, as merely a variant spelling for חֵל, the meaning would be *rampart* (see Nah. iii. 8),—*will smite her rampart into the sea* (RVm.).

and she. The pron. is emphatic: *and she herself.*

5. The alarm of the Philistines at the fall of the strongholds of Phoenicia: with a foe advancing from the north, the main impediment to his march southwards would thus be removed, and their own turn might be expected next. Four of the five Philistine cities (1 S. vi. 17 f.) are mentioned, the one omitted being Gath, which is passed by also in Am. i. 6, 8, Zeph. ii. 4, Jer. xxv. 20.

her expectation. Or, *her hope*: properly, *that to which she looked* (viz. for help), the same word which is used, in the same sense, in Is. xx. 5, 6 (of Cush, as the political hope of Judah). What is meant is Tyre (*vv.* 3, 4), to which, after the subjugation of Syria (*vv.* 1, 2), the cities of Philistia would look to check the further advance of the invader.

be inhabited. *Lit.* 'sit': see on ii. 4.

6. Render either, **And a bastard race** (or **half-breeds**) **shall dwell,** or, **And a bastard** (or **half-breed**) **shall sit** (as king); for 'bastard' may be meant either collectively or individually, and *yāshab* may mean either *dwell,* or *sit* (enthroned, or as king), Ps. xxix. 10, Am. i. 5 RVm.; the former rendering is the more probable. *Mamzēr* (Dt. xxiii. 2) means, according to the Rabbis, the issue of an incestuous marriage: here, however, it probably denotes more generally *half-breeds* (Smith), LXX ἀλλογενεῖς, with reference to the refuse population, apt to collect in forsaken towns or villages (the choice of the word may have been suggested by Neh. xiii. 23 f.). The verse will then depict the utter humiliation

[a] dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the
Philistines. And I will take away his blood out of his 7
mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth;
and he also shall be a remnant for our God: and he shall
be as a chieftain in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite. And 8

[a] Or, *sit* as king

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of Philistia (cf. *v.* 6ᵇ): its native population gone, and their place taken by miserable half-breeds. That each city has its own particular doom is of course merely a trait in the poetical representation: the judgements, each and all, must be thought of as affecting the whole population.

the pride, &c.: i.e. their political independence.

7. The half-breeds thus occupying the Philistine territory will be cleansed from their idolatry, and incorporated as Yahweh-worshippers in the community of Judah. The pronouns *he, his,* refer to the half-breed race as a whole.

his blood. Alluding to heathen or idolatrous sacrifices, which were eaten (cf. Nu. xxv. 2) 'with the blood' (Ez. xxxiii. 25), as opposed to the legitimate Israelitish sacrifices, which, when partaken of by the worshippers, as in the case of the 'peace offerings,' were scrupulously drained of blood (1 S. xiv. 32 f.; Lev. xvii. 11, 14 *al.*).

abominations. Better (see *DB.* s. v. 'ABOMINATION'), **detestable things:** here either (cf. clause *a*) of the flesh of heathen sacrifices,— שִׁקּוּץ being often used, especially in Deuteronomic writers and Ezekiel (e.g. 1 K. xi. 5, 7, Ez. v. 11), of heathen gods,—or of rites and objects connected with their worship; or perhaps of the flesh of animals ceremonially 'unclean' (Lev. xi), cf. nearly the same word (שֶׁקֶץ) in Lev. xi. 10, 11, 12, 13, &c.

and he also, &c. Even this mixed population will yield a 'remnant' to become worshippers of Yahweh. Isaiah's doctrine of the 'remnant' (see on Zeph. iii. 11) is applied here to the inhabitants of Philistia.

as a chieftain. Rather, **as a clan-chief**; the Heb. word being the one used of the tribal or clan-chiefs of Edom in Gen. xxxvi. 15–19, Ex. xv. 15, where it is rendered 'duke' (i.e. *dux*, LXX ἡγούμενος), and the meaning being that the survivors just mentioned will acquire then the dignity of a clan-chief in Judah. It is better, however, changing merely the points, to read **as a clan** (for the word, see Jud. vi. 15 EVV. *family*; Mic. v. 2 RVm. *families*): the meaning will then be that the survivors who become worshippers of Yahweh will be incorporated in Judah, and take in it the

I will encamp about mine house [a] against the army, that none pass through or return: and no [b] oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes.

9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and [c] having [d] salvation; lowly, and riding upon an

[a] Or, as otherwise read, *as a garrison* [b] Or, *exactor*
[c] Heb. *saved.* [d] Or, *victory*

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same rank as a native Judahite clan, while a Philistine city, such as Ekron, will rank with the Jebusites or inhabitants of Jerusalem itself.

Jebusite. An archaism for *Jerusalemite*,—the 'Jebusites' being the old inhabitants of Jerusalem until expelled by David (2 S. v. 6 ff.).

8. But Yahweh will protect His temple, and Jerusalem, that no hostile army, or oppressor, assail them any more.

about. Rather, **for** (the protection of).

against the army. There is no art. in the Hebrew: render rather, *that there be no army*, (even) *none passing by or returning.* But probably RVm. *as a garrison* (cf. 1 S. xiii. 23) is right.

that none: i. e. that there be no more armies passing to and fro through Palestine, and threatening Jerusalem. The verse might well have been written at some time between 320 and 300 B. C., when the armies of Alexander's surviving generals, or of his successors, repeatedly traversed Palestine (pp. 231 f.) in one direction or another, in the struggle to secure Palestine and Coele-Syria.

oppressor. The Heb. *nāgas* means properly 'to press hard,' whether as a taskmaster (Ex. v. 6), or by other violence (Is. iii. 5, liii. 7), or as a foreign 'oppressor' (Is. ix. 4, xiv. 2, 4), or (RVm.) an 'exactor' (2 K. xxiii. 35).

through them. Rather, **by them**; e. g. by the coast-route.

for now have I seen with mine eyes: viz. the violence done to my people, and, it is implied, am prepared to interpose and check it. Cf. Ex. iii. 7; Ps. x. 14.

9–17. The Messianic king enters his capital in triumph, as the Prince of peace (*vv.* 9–10); and the Israelites still in exile, having vanquished the Greeks, return to dwell in safety in their own land.

9. The advent of the ideal King, or Messiah, is an occasion worthy to be greeted by Zion with acclamation and rejoicing.

daughter: the personified population; cf. Zeph. iii. 14.

just. Or, **righteous.** The first attribute of a ruler, and hence

ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut 10
off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jeru-

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predicated emphatically of the Messianic king, Is. xi. 3–5, xvi. 5, Jer. xxiii. 5 (‖ xxxiii. 15). The position of the word *before* 'saved' (i. e. victorious), and the fact that the rule of the ideal king is first characterized in *v.* 10^{b}, lead Hitz., Now., and Marti, however, to think that it has here the meaning of *in the right* (viz. against his foes); cf. for this sense of the word Dt. xxv. 1.

having salvation. The Heb. word is a *passive* participle, and means simply **saved** (Dt. xxxiii. 29; Ps. xxxiii. 16), viz. through Yahweh's having given him 'salvation,' i. e. (see on Hab. iii. 8) deliverance from his foes. The Messiah is described not as bringing victory or salvation, but as the passive recipient of it. 'Saved' is, however, rather a poor word to use in such a connexion; and **victorious** is the word that would most adequately express what is intended.

lowly. This is עָנָו, not עָנִי, the word used here (see 'Poor' in *DB.*); to obtain the idea 'lowly' or 'humble' (cf. LXX. *πραΰς*, 'meek'; so Mt. xxi. 5), we must alter the text and *read* עָנָו. עָנִי, properly *afflicted*, **poor,** is the word used often, as explained on Hab. iii. 14, Zeph. iii. 12, to denote the pious servants of God; and that is probably the sense which it has here: it characterizes the Messiah as belonging 'not to the worldly or godless party dominant in Jerusalem, but to that of the oppressed pious' (We.).

riding upon an ass. Another point in which Israel's ideal king will differ alike from the earlier kings of Israel and from ordinary worldly rulers; he will appear riding, not like a worldly conqueror on his war-horse (for in his day the war-horse is to be no more, *v.* 10), but upon the ass, the beast of peace (cf. Gen. xlix. 11). See the fulfilment in Mt. xxi. 5, John xii. 15. But, as in other cases, the prophet's ideal as a whole, in the form in which he projected it, has never been fulfilled: for the picture drawn by him is not that of a *spiritual ruler*, swaying the hearts of men by the influences of a great religion, but that of a *conqueror*, returning from the defeat of earthly foes, cutting off the implements of war, and securing peace for his subjects by righteous government.

10. All implements of war will be destroyed; the ideal king will maintain a far-reaching rule of peace. For the picture, cf. Hos. ii. 18^{b}, Is. ii. 4 (= Mic. iv. 3), ix. 5, Mic. v. 10.

I will cut off. LXX, We., Now., Marti, *he will cut off.*

from Ephraim. The prophet pictures the northern tribes as restored to their old homes, which are now (*v.* 1 ff.) free for them to occupy. So in the sequel, *v.* 13, x. 6, 7, 10. Cf. Is. xi. 12; Jer. iii. 12, 18, xxxi. 4–9, 15–20; Zech. viii. 13, &c.

salem, and the battle bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the nations: and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from [a] the River to the ends of the
11 earth. As for thee also, because of the blood of thy

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[a] See Ex. xxiii. 31.

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speak peace unto the nations. He will maintain peace among the nations, who are represented as owning his sway, not by force, but by his righteous decisions (cf. Is. ii. 4ª = Mic. iv. 3ª).

from sea to sea, &c. Verbally as Ps. lxxii. 8, also of the ideal king. The 'River' is of course the Euphrates, the ideal limit of Israel's territory towards the E. in the promises Gen. xv. 18, Ex. xxiii. 31, Dt. i. 7, xi. 24, Jos. i. 4 (cf. Is. xxvii. 12): the two 'seas' will be the Mediterranean Sea (Dt. xi. 24; Jos. i. 4) and the vaguely known sea supposed to encircle the E. of Asia. The entire picture is of a rule like that of Solomon (1 K. iv. 21, cf. *vv.* 24ᵇ, 25, 34), extended so as to embrace in effect the entire known earth.

11–12. The Israelites scattered among the heathen may now hope for restoration; and Zion will receive double compensation for what she has gone through. If the prophecy dates from B. C. 332, the reference may be general (cf. Is. xxvii. 13); if it is later, the reference may be in particular (cf. *v.* 13) to Jews settled, or enslaved, in Greek cities, who after Alexander's conquests soon became numerous: Josephus, for instance, tells us (*Ant.* xii. 1) that Ptolemy Lagi (B. C. 322–285) transported many either as slaves or as compulsory settlers to Egypt, others also migrated there voluntarily on account of the advantages which the country offered them (cf. Mahaffy, *Empire of the Ptolemies*, p. 85 ff.; and Schürer, art. 'DIASPORA' in *DB.* v. 91, 95, 96, &c.). Seleucus Nicator (B. C. 312–280), also, planted many Jewish colonists in Antioch and elsewhere, giving them rights of citizenship (Jos. *Ant.* xii. 3. 1).

11. Thou also. The pron. is fem., showing that the daughter of Zion (*v.* 9) is still addressed. But the 'also' refers really to the 'prisoners': these also—i. e. the Israelites still in captivity—will share in Yahweh's deliverance, as well as those in Judah and Jerusalem.

because of the blood of thy covenant. Because of Yahweh's covenant with Israel, which was concluded solemnly with blood (Ex. xxiv. 5–8). It is argued, however, that had this been the meaning, *my covenant* would have been said; and so Now., Smith, Marti render *because of thy covenant-blood*, i. e. the blood which the people shed daily in sacrifice to maintain the covenant.

covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit
wherein is no water. [a] Turn you to the strong hold, ye 12
prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare that I will
render double unto thee. For I have bent Judah for me, 13
I have filled the bow with Ephraim; and I will stir up
thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O [b] Greece, and will
make thee as the sword of a mighty man. And the LORD 14

[a] Or, *Return*

[b] Heb. *Javan.*

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have sent forth: i.e. *will assuredly send forth*; cf. Mal. ii. 9.

thy prisoners. I. e. thy children still in captivity: cf. Ps. lxix. 33 (see *v.* 35), cii. 20.

the pit (Gen. xxxvii. 24). Or, **the dungeon** (Jer. xxxviii. 6): in either case a figure of captivity.

wherein is no water. And in which, consequently, the prisoner was in danger of perishing from thirst.

12. These 'prisoners,' who now at length may cherish 'hope' of deliverance, are accordingly invited to **return** (RVm.) to the 'strong hold,' fig. of their home, as a place of security,—perhaps with allusion to the rocky fastnesses of Palestine.

even to-day. Rather, **to-day** (i. e. *now*) **also,**—viz. as before, when the return granted by Cyrus was in prospect. 'Thee' is Zion (*v.* 13).

double. I. e. double compensation: cf. Is. lxi. 7.

13–16. The great victory which the Jews, with Yahweh's help, will gain over the Greeks, inaugurating thereby the Messianic age (*v.* 9 f.).

13^a. A poetical way of saying that the warriors of Israel are weapons in Yahweh's hand: Judah is His bow, and Ephraim His arrows. As before (*v.* 10), the Israelites of the Northern kingdom are pictured as brought back from exile, and taking part in the conflict.

13^b. and will make thee—i. e. Zion—**as the sword of a mighty man:** i. e. of a warrior (see on Nah. ii. 3).

Greece, Heb. **Yavan.** I. e. 'Ιάϝονες, Ionians, the name by which the Greeks were always known to the Hebrews (Gen. x. 2, 4; Ez. xxvii. 13; Is. lxvi. 19; Joel iii. 6 Heb.; Dan. viii. 20, 21, xi. 2).

14. In the midst of the fray, Yahweh Himself will appear above the combatants, in order to help the Israelites. The imagery is evidently suggested by a great storm; but whereas elsewhere (e. g. Is. xxx. 30) the lightning, for instance, *is* Yahweh's arrow, and the thunder *is* His voice, here His arrows (Hab. iii. 11 *al.*) are only *compared* to the lightning.

shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as
the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet,
15 and shall go with whirlwinds of the south. The LORD of
hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and shall
tread down the sling stones; and they shall drink, and
make a noise as through wine: and they shall be filled
16 like bowls, like the corners of the altar. And the LORD

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blow the trumpet: the signal for the attack.

in whirlwinds of the south. Such as were especially vehement and destructive (Is. xxi. 1; cf. Job xxxvii. 9). For Yahweh travelling *in* the storm, cf. on Nah. i. 3^b.

15. they shall devour, &c. If the text is correct, the meaning must be *shall devour* (their enemies), *and trample down* contemptuously *the sling stones* which have been hurled against them, but have missed their mark. But perhaps We., Now., Marti are right in reading, *and they shall prevail* (ויכלו for ואכלו), *and tread down the sons of* . . . (בני for אבני); the word rendering 'sling' being a corruption of the name or description of their foes.

and they shall drink (viz. their blood), **and make a noise as** (through) **wine** (i. e. as if intoxicated through wine). But a much better sense is obtained by reading, with MSS. of LXX, דמם for והמו; we then get, **and they shall drink their blood as wine**; cf. the next clause.

and they shall be filled (viz. with the blood) **like bowls.** The 'bowls' (lit. *tossing-vessels*; EVV. 'basons,' Ex. xxxviii. 3 *al.*) in which the sacrificial blood was thrown in a volume, or tossed (*zāraḳ*), against the sides of [not 'upon'] the altar, Lev. i. 5, 11 *al.* (RV. unfortunately, as AV., 'sprinkle,' which not only conveys an incorrect idea of the action meant, but also confuses it with an entirely different word, correctly rendered *sprinkle*, Lev. iv. 6, 17, v. 9, viii. 11 *al.*).

like the corners of the altar. Against which, as just described, the blood would be tossed,—in such a way, viz. that with two tossings the four sides of the altar were drenched with it (*Zebāḥim* v. 4). It is a strange picture: the victorious Jews as full of the blood of their foes as the sacrificial basons when an animal has been just slaughtered for sacrifice; and as drenched with it as the sides of the altar when the blood has just been tossed against them. But it reflects, no doubt, the *animus* with which a people that had suffered much regarded its oppressors. Cf. Nu. xxiii. 24 (where, however, though Israel is meant, the figure is that of a wild beast); also Is. xxxiv. 7, lxiii. 3.

their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for *they shall be as* the stones of a crown, [a] lifted on high over his land. For how great is [b] his [c] goodness, 17
and how great is [b] his beauty! corn shall make the young men flourish, and new wine the maids.

[a] Or, *glittering upon &c.* [b] Or, *their* [c] Or, *prosperity*

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16. as the flock, &c. Better (Keil), (even) *his people as a flock* [1]; *for* (they are) *stones* (i. e. *jewels*) *of a crown, glittering* [2] (RVm.) *upon his land;* Yahweh will deliver His people, and tend them like a flock, for they are as jewels upon His land, which He prizes highly. The text is, however, suspicious: the comparison to a 'flock,' and afterwards that to the jewels of a crown, both come in abruptly: the subj. 'they' (המה) after 'for' is also much desiderated. 'For (they are) stones' looks much as if it were an error for 'as stones' (כי אבני for כאבני); and We., Now., Marti, would omit 'like the glittering stones of a crown' as a gloss, and read (Marti), 'And Yahweh their God will save them in that day; like a flock will he shepherd them (ירעם for עמו) upon his land.' The omission, however, is violent; and perhaps 'as jewels of a crown glittering upon his land' should be retained after 'shepherd them.'

17. The fertility of the land, and the happiness of the people, after their deliverance.

The pronouns must refer to 'his people,' and are therefore properly, for clearness, rendered **their** in RVm. RV. 'his' is intended to refer to Yahweh; but 'beauty' is never predicated of Him. טוֹב, applied to Israel, may mean either *fairness* (Hos. x. 11) or (RVm.) *prosperity*; but **its** *goodness* or *good things* (Gen. xlv. 18; Is. i. 19), and **its** *beauty*, referring to the land, with a slight change in the Heb. pron. (We., Now., Marti), would be a great improvement. For fertility of the soil as a blessing of the Messianic age, see on viii. 12.

corn and **must** (see on Hag. i. 11) are mentioned as two of the most valued gifts of the soil of Canaan (see *ibid.*). That one is to make 'young men' to flourish, and the other 'maids,' is of course merely a rhetorical distinction: cf. Is. xi. 12 (where *outcasts* is masc., and *dispersed* fem.).

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[1] Reading כַּצֹּאן for כְּצֹאן.

[2] Implying מתנוצצות for מתנוססות: cf. ניצוץ 'spark' (Is. i. 31), נוצצים 'sparkling' (Ez. i. 7). מתנוססות, if correct, would mean *lifted up as an ensign* (AV.), an improbable epithet to apply to the jewels of a crown; RV. *lifted on high* is a questionable paraphrase of this.

10 Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain, *even of* the Lord that maketh lightnings; and he shall give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.
2 For the teraphim have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie; and [a] they have told false dreams, they

[a] Or, *the dreamers speak falsely*

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x. 1–2. A short piece standing by itself, without any obvious connexion either with ch. ix or with x. 3 ff., the gist of which is, Ask help of Yahweh, not of the teraphim or diviners!

1. Render: **Ask of Yahweh rain in the time of the spring-rain! Yahweh maketh the lightning-flashes, and the winter-rain he giveth to them, to every one herbage in the field.**

rain. The occasion of the prophecy may naturally be supposed to have been a failure of rain at a time when it was expected and required; but no doubt 'rain' is also intended as a type of other blessings, which are dependent upon God's favour and peace.

latter rain. **Spring-rain** would be a clearer rendering. What is meant is the rain which fell in March or April, and was needed to mature the ripening crops (cf. Dt. xi. 14; Jer. v. 24; Joel ii. 23). It is opposed to the 'former' or autumn-rain, which fell in October or November, and was necessary to fit the soil to receive the seeds (*ll. cc.*; Jer. iii. 3).

Yahweh maketh lightning-flashes (the rare word found otherwise only Job xxviii. 26, xxxviii. 25): the precursors and accompaniments of rain (Ps. cxxxv. 7). The words give the reason why rain should be sought from Him.

the winter-rain. 'Showers of rain' is a weak rendering: *geshem* means *a burst of rain*, and is used specially of the heavy rains of winter (Cant. ii. 11; Ezr. x. 13 'it is a time of *heavy rain*'): cf. the writer's note on Am. iv. 7.

2. For the teraphim and diviners can give no help, but are on the contrary the cause of the calamities under which the people suffer.

the teraphim. Probably house-gods, highly venerated by the superstitious Israelites (Jud. xvii. 5, xviii. 14; Hos. iii. 4), regarded as the givers of family prosperity (cf. Gen. xxxi. 19), and also used in divination (Ez. xxi. 21). They were apparently figures in human form (1 S. xix. 13, 16).

have spoken . . . have seen . . . have told. Better, **speak . . . see . . . tell:** an established fact, not an event of recent occurrence, is what is referred to. For 'see,' cf. on Nah. i. 1.

vanity: i. e. what is empty and useless. Cf. Is. xli. 29.

idle dreams. For dreams and diviners in connexion, cf.

comfort in vain: therefore they go their way like sheep, they are afflicted, because there is no shepherd.

Mine anger is kindled against the shepherds, and I will punish the he-goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and shall make them as his 3

Jer. xxvii. 9, xxix. 8. RVm. (which is a paraphrase of 'the dreams speak falsely [idly]') implies a not very probable correction of the text (החלמות שוא for חלמות השוא).

they comfort in vain. Viz. when they promise rain and fruitful seasons. Cf. Jer. xiv. 22.

therefore: because, viz., they consult teraphim and diviners.

they move from place to place (Jer. xxxi. 24 Heb.) **like sheep:** i. e. lead an unsettled, restless life, and fall into various misfortunes for lack of Yahweh's guidance.

For 'they are afflicted,' *they wander about* (ינעו for יענו) would yield an idea more consonant with the context.

x. 3–12. *The fall of the godless foreign tyrants.* Yahweh will visit His people, free them from their foreign rulers ('shepherds' and 'he-goats'), and appoint them native rulers of their own (*vv.* 3, 4). Endued with new strength, they will thereupon vanquish their foes; the Ephraimites in exile will return; Egypt and Assyria will be humbled; and the restored nation will glory in its God (*vv.* 5–12). The imagery in *v.* 3, as in Jer. xxiii. 1–4, Ez. xxxiv (where, however, the 'shepherds' represent native rulers).

3–5. Yahweh is angry with the 'shepherds,' and 'he-goats,' by both of which foreign rulers seem to be meant (see *v.* 4): He will visit His flock, and change the poor leaderless sheep, the Jews, into war-horses, give them strong chiefs of their own and weapons of war (*v.* 4), and enable them to prevail against their enemies (*v.* 5).

3. punish: Heb., as often, **visit upon.** See the next note.

hath visited. The prophetic perfect = **will visit.** The word is here used in its favourable sense, of *visiting* for the purpose of delivering, freeing from oppression, &c. (Ex. iii. 16; Jer. xxix. 10). It is used similarly in its two opposed applications in Jer. xxiii. 2.

he-goats. Fig. of *leaders, rulers,* as Is. xiv. 9; Ez. xxxiv. 17 (here of the Israelitish magnates, who secured all the best things for themselves, *vv.* 18, 19).

as his goodly horse. A weak rendering: *his* **stately** (or **majestic**) *horse* is what the Heb. word used (הוד) means. Yahweh will transform His helpless sheep into splendid war-horses. A prophecy, remarks We., which was remarkably fulfilled in the Maccabean age.

4 goodly horse in the battle. From him shall come forth
the corner stone, from him the nail, from him the battle
5 bow, from him every [a] exactor together. And they shall
be as mighty men, treading down *their enemies* in the mire
of the streets in the battle; and they shall fight, because
the LORD is with them: and the riders on horses shall be
6 confounded. And I will strengthen the house of Judah,
and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will [b] bring

[a] Or, *ruler* [b] Or, *cause them to dwell*

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4. Judah will now be no longer under the rule of foreign tyrants, but will have native rulers of its own.

From him. I. e. from Judah; cf. Jer. xxx. 21 'And his noble shall be from himself, and his ruler shall come forth from his midst' (Dt. xvii. 15). 'From himself' would be here clearer.

the corner (stone). Fig. of *princes*, or *leading men*, supports of the state. See Jud. xx. 2, and 1 S. xiv. 38 ('chiefs,' RVm. *corners*), Is. xix. 13. The same figure is found in Arabic, where *rukn*, properly the 'corner' upon which a building is supported, also means a 'noble.'

the nail. Better, **the tent-pin,** another figure for those who are the stays or supports of the state.

exactor. Better, **governor, ruler** (RVm.),—here, unlike ix. 8, without any bad connotation, as Is. iii. 12, lx. 17.

5. How, their martial power now restored, they will triumph over their foes.

as mighty men. I. e. as warriors (ix. 13). But perhaps, interchanging a ב and a כ, we should read (We., Now., Smith, Marti), 'and they shall **tread down** (more exactly **be treading down**) the mighty men **as** mire in the streets': the comparison, as Mic. vii. 12; Ps. xviii. 42.

the riders on horses. A designation of the foes, suggested perhaps by Ez. xxxviii. 15, cf. xxiii. 6, 12, 23.

6-7. Thus Judah will be 'strengthened,' i. e. autonomous and victorious; and then the 'house of Joseph' also, i. e. the Israelites of the ten tribes still in exile (cf. ix. 10, 13), will be brought back, and again live in the light of Yahweh's favour, and (*v.* 7) in the consciousness of new strength.

6. strengthen. Better, **give might to** (cognate with 'mighty,' *v.* 5), i. e. martial prowess, independence, &c.

bring . . . again. Better, **bring . . . back.** 'Again,' when AV. was made, was often used in the sense of 'back,' and the

them again, for I have mercy upon them; and they shall
be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the Lord
their God, and I will hear them. And *they of* Ephraim 7
shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice
as through wine: yea, their children shall see it, and
rejoice; their heart shall be glad in the Lord. I will 8
hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed
them: and they shall increase as they have increased.
[a] And I will sow them among the peoples; and they shall 9

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[a] Or, *And though I sow them . . . they shall remember &c.*

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archaism has been frequently retained in RV. (cf. on Nah. ii. 2). But it is liable now to be misunderstood; and the meaning is more clearly expressed by **back.** In *form*, the Hebrew word is anomalous, and looks like a hybrid form, compounded of *I will bring them back*, and *I will cause them to dwell* (RVm.). The anomaly can, however, in reality be due only to textual corruption; and the context shows that **I will bring them back** is right.

I have mercy. Better, *I have* **taken compassion** (the proph. perfect). Cf. Jer. xxxi. 20 (the same Heb.), also of Ephraim.

7. The Ephraimites' proud consciousness of their new strength.

like a mighty man. I. e. like a warrior (*v.* 5).

shall see it. Viz. Yahweh's deliverance (*v.* 5^b, 6^a).

8-9. The means by which their return will be effected.

8. hiss for them. Poet. for *call them together*, the figure being borrowed from the practice of bee-owners. Cf. Is. v. 26, vii. 18.

as they have increased. Viz. in the past: they shall again be as numerous as they were before the judgement overtook them. Cf. Ez. xxxvi. 10, 11.

9. I will sow them, &c. The words are understood to mean, I will spread them abroad among the peoples, not for their destruction, but, like seeds scattered broad-cast in the earth, for their multiplication. But the context, which on both sides (*vv.* 6, 8, 10) speaks of Ephraim's return from exile, does not favour this interpretation; and in Hos. ii. 23, Jer. xxxi. 27, which have been quoted in support of it, the expressions used are different. Probably we should read (We., Now.) 'And though I scattered them (וָאֱזָרֵם for ואזרעם) among the peoples, yet in far countries shall they remember me,' i. e. (Ez. xx. 43, xxxvi. 31) think of me, and turn to me in penitence.

remember me in far countries: and they shall live with
10 their children, and shall return. I will bring them again
also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of
Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead
and Lebanon; and *place* shall not be found for them.
11 And he shall pass through the sea of affliction, and shall
smite [a]the waves in the sea, and all the depths of
the Nile shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall

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[a] Or, *the sea of waves*

---

live with. Rather, with a change of points, **nourish up** (2 S. xii. 3), preserve alive (Gen. xlvii. 25), no longer lose them.

and return. Viz. to their own land.

10. The reference is still to the ten tribes (*v.* 7); and so Egypt and Assyria, not Babylonia, are spoken of as the places of exile (cf. Hos. ix. 3, 6, xi. 11). As, however, in *v.* 11 'Assyria' is the name not of a country, but of a power or people, there may be at the same time a reference to the Egypt of the Ptolemies, and to the Syrian empire of the Seleucidae, represented by 'Assyria' (cf. p. 231).

again. Better, **back**; cf. on *v.* 6.

Gilead and Lebanon. Mentioned as representing the territory, on the E. and W. of Jordan respectively, possessed formerly by the ten tribes. Cf. Mic. vii. 14; Jer. l. 19.

place **shall not be found for them.** So numerous will the restored Israelites be. Cf., for this trait in the ideal future, Is. xxvi. 15, xxxiii. 17, xlix. 20, liv. 3, Obad. 19 f.

11. And he—i. e. Yahweh, as Ephraim's leader (Ex. xiv. 19 f., cf. Mic. ii. 13 b)—**shall pass through the sea** (of) **straitness** (the sea, which threatens to leave no passage wide enough for the returning exiles to pass through), **and he will smite the sea** (of) **waves** (so that a path is made through them, with allusion to Ex. xiv. 16, 21 f.). The imagery is borrowed from the account of the passage of the Red Sea, and generalized: whatever rivers or seas impede the progress of the returning exiles will be smitten by Yahweh, and dried up (cf. Is. xi. 15), as of old He smote and dried up the waters of the Red Sea: 'Assyria,' and Egypt, alike powerless to arrest the return of the exiles, will thus both be humbled. But the expression, 'the sea, straitness,' is a strange one; and it is quite possible that we should read for it (with We., Now., Marti) 'the sea *of Egypt*' (ים מצרים for ים צרה: so Is. xi. 15).

the pride of Assyria. Cf. Is. x. 8 f., 12, 13 f.

be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart
away. And I will strengthen them in the LORD; and they 12
shall walk up and down in his name, saith the LORD.

[A^2] Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may 11
devour thy cedars. Howl, O fir tree, for the cedar is 2

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sceptre. Or, *rod*, the emblem of oppression (Is. ix. 4, xiv. 29).

12. The prophet returns to the thought of *v.* 6.

I will give them might (*v.* 6) **by Yahweh.** Emphatic for 'by myself'; cf. Hos. i. 7. But the change of person is awkward: read prob., with other points, 'their might shall be in Yahweh.'

walk up and down in his name: i. e. behave (Ps. xxxv. 14) as if acting in His authority. But LXX, Pesh. have the more forcible and probable reading (We., Now., Smith, Marti), 'and in his name shall they *make their boast*' (יתהללו for יתהלכו), Ps. xxxiv. 2, and especially cv. 3 (where the same verb is rendered 'glory').

xi. 1–3. A fire devours the cedars of Lebanon; the oaks of Bashan will soon share the same fate: shepherds bewail their desolated pastures, and lions roar because their lairs by the Jordan are destroyed. What the meaning of this is, is uncertain. It may mean merely that the way will shortly be open for an invader to advance from the north, and penetrate into Judah (so Wright): but the description is usually understood in a symbolical sense, the cedars and oaks, the shepherds and the lions, representing either (Hitz., Ew.) the rulers of Israel, or (We., Now., Marti, Kp.) the rulers of the nations,—in Kirkp.'s words, 'the rulers and potentates of the nations are swept down by the storm of war. The rulers are heard lamenting the loss of their magnificence; the potentates mourning for the destruction of their strongholds.' It is also disputed whether the verses form the close of x. 3–12 (We., Now., Marti), or the introduction to xi. 4–17 (Hitz., Ew., Wright, Kp.), or are an independent prophecy by themselves (Smith). But x. 12 seems a natural close; and the context speaks not of an invasion of Israel, but of Israel's deliverance from tyrannical rulers; so, though it is impossible to feel entire confidence in any view, the verses *may* perhaps be meant as a symbolical description of the ruin of nations declared in xi. 6 to be approaching (Kp.).

1. Lebanon is bidden poetically *open its doors*, in order that the enemy may enter in, and fire its cedars.

2. Howl, O fir tree, &c. When the 'cedar' is 'fallen,' the smaller 'fir tree' may 'howl'; for the same fate will now assuredly befall it.

goodly. Better, **noble, glorious:** of a cedar, as Ez. xvii. 23.

fallen, because the [a] goodly ones are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan, for the [b] strong forest is come down.
3 A voice of the howling of the shepherds! for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions! for the pride of Jordan is spoiled.
4 Thus said the LORD my God: Feed the flock of

[a] Or, *glorious* [b] Or, *defenced*

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oaks of Bashan. The oaks of Bashan are alluded to elsewhere in the O. T. (e. g. Is. ii. 13): there are still forests of them on the slopes of Jebel Ḥauran, about 60 miles E. of the Sea of Galilee.

strong. Rather, **inaccessible,** with reference no doubt to the steep mountain sides, up which alone the cedars of Lebanon could be reached. The Hebrew is lit. *cut off*; and is the word used regularly of what we, from a different point of view, describe as a 'fortified' city (EVV. 'fenced,' or 'defenced': cf. RVm. here), properly one *cut off*, and so *inaccessible* to assailants.

is come down: i. e. is felled; cf. Is. xxxii. 19 ^{a}.

3. Hark! the howling of the shepherds, for their glory,—cognate with the word corrected to 'glorious' in *v.* 2,—**is laid waste:** i. e. their broad and noble pasture lands. Cf. Jer. xxv. 36 'Hark! the cry of the shepherds, and the howling of the noble ones of the flock (fig. for the ruling men of Judah); for Yahweh is laying waste their pasture.'

Hark! the roaring of the young lions: for the pride of Jordan is laid waste. The banks of the Jordan, especially in its lower course, are fringed by a thick growth of sub-tropical trees and shrubs, which was anciently the haunt of lions; and this was called the *pride of Jordan*: see Jer. xii. 5 (where its dangers, as a region infested by wild beasts, are alluded to), xlix. 19 = l. 44 (where Nebuchadnezzar is compared to a 'lion' coming up out of it). Here the young lions are represented as roaring, because their lair has been laid waste by the invader.

xi. 4–17. The people's rejection of the good shepherd. The substitution of a worthless shepherd, and its consequences for them. Israel has been the prey of selfish shepherds (i. e. rulers) who have made traffic of it ruthlessly; and the prophet describes what, under these circumstances, he has done by Divine direction. First he enacted the part of a good shepherd, who rescued his flock from its oppressors, and took measures to secure his people's welfare; then, being rejected by his people, in order to mark the consequences which will follow, he assumes the character of a worthless shepherd, who will make havoc of the people for his own advantage, but who will eventually meet with a just retribution.

The sequel follows in xiii. 7–9. The prophets were in the habit sometimes of making their preaching more effective by embodying it in accompanying symbolical acts (Is. xx; Jer. xiii. 1–14, xix. 1–17; Ez. xii. 1–16); and here by this means 'the history is presented in living figures, and at the same time the Divine judgement pronounced upon the persons represented' (Marti). In the present instance, however, from the nature of the case, the prophet could not, any more than Jeremiah in Jer. xxv. 15 ff., have actually enacted the actions narrated; he can only be describing what was in reality transacted either in imagination or in a vision.

The prophecy is the most enigmatic in the Old Testament. It is obviously an allegory, the imagery, like that of x. 3, being based upon Jer. xxiii. 1–4, Ez. xxxiv, in both of which passages it is taught how Yahweh will overthrow Israel's unworthy shepherds, and appoint in their place one or more true shepherds (Jer. xxiii. 4; Ez. xxxiv. 23 ff., cf. xxxvii. 24). The meaning of the allegory is, however, obscure: it is neither interpreted, nor apparent, as in the case of the allegories in Ez. xvii, xix, xxiii. Very few particulars of the internal history of the Jews from the time of Nehemiah (432 B.C.) to *c.* 175 B.C., when Antiochus Epiphanes began his reign, have been handed down to us: if our information were fuller, we might perhaps find that, at least as far as *v.* 14, perhaps as far as *v.* 16, it described in a symbolical form, with the view of drawing out the lessons which they taught, events which had actually happened. Or it may be that the prophet founds his allegory upon historical facts, but does not reproduce them exactly: upon the basis of such facts as that Israel was a prey of foreign despots, was neglected by its own rulers, and despised all wiser counsellors, he may have drawn an emblematic picture of the evil results which the rejection of Yahweh's counsellors would entail. The 'traffickers of the sheep' might be either the generals of Alexander, who after his death contended for the possession of Coele-Syria and Palestine (p. 231); or their successors on the throne of Egypt or Antioch, the Ptolemies or the Seleucidae, both of whom valued Palestine chiefly as a source of revenue[1]: the 'shepherds' seem to be the native rulers, primarily the high-priests (see xiii. 7), who in post-exilic times wielded the chief power in the state, though others in authority at the time are perhaps included: three of these (*v.* 8) may have been suddenly overthrown.

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[1] As shown above (pp. 231 f.), between 323 and 301 B.C. Palestine repeatedly changed hands: from 301 it continued for many years in the undisturbed possession of the Ptolemies; but Antiochus the Great (223–187) made strenuous efforts to gain possession of it: in 217 he invaded it with a large army, but was defeated by Ptolemy Philopator at Raphia, on the border of Egypt, and obliged to retire; in 202 he again occupied it temporarily, taking possession of Jerusalem: in 198 by his victory over Ptolemy Epiphanes, at Paneion, near the sources of the Jordan, he finally secured it for Syria. Cf. the writer's *Daniel* (in the *Cambridge Bible*), pp. xxxiv–xxxvii, 166–173.

Attempts have been made to fix the allusions more definitely. By those who (see p. 230) consider the prophecy to be pre-exilic, the 'three shepherds' are generally supposed to be Zechariah, Shallum (2 K. xv. 8, 13), and some third usurper, not mentioned in the history, of the same time; a common and ancient interpretation is of the three offices of king (or prince), priest, and prophet, supposed to have been brought to an end either at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586, or by the death of Christ: Keil thinks of the rulers of the three world-monarchies, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans; Stade suggests the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians; Dr. Wright (pp. 313, 316 f.) explains the passage as a prediction of the fall of the three Syrian kings, the foes of the Jews, Antiochus Epiphanes (B.C. 175–164), Antiochus Eupator (164–162), and Demetrius I (162–150), who all met their death within a period of thirty years (symbolized by the 'one month' = thirty days): Wellhausen (thinking the passage to be *written* between B.C. 200 and 166) considers the allusion to be to some of the high-priests who at that time, just before the Maccabean rising, followed one another in rapid succession: Marti thinks definitely of Jason, brother of the legitimate high-priest Onias III, who purchased the high-priesthood from Antiochus Epiphanes, expelled Onias III, and became afterwards the leader of the Hellenizing party in Jerusalem (B.C. 174–171); Menelaus, who, outbidding Jason, secured the high-priesthood for himself (B.C. 171–164); and Lysimachus, brother and deputy of Menelaus, who excited the hatred of the populace and was killed in a riot (2 Macc. iv–v, xiii. 3–8),—the 'month' being taken generally to signify a short time. Marti suggests further that the worthless shepherd of xi. 15–17 may be Alcimus, the treacherous and unsatisfactory high-priest (B.C. 164–160), appointed by Demetrius I (1 Macc. vii. 5–25, ix. 1, 54–56). Kirkpatrick, on the other hand, thinks that no precise meaning need be attached to the expression: the three shepherds are 'a part of the furniture of the allegory, and their removal by the prophet within a month is intended to signify God's intention to deal promptly and effectually with the oppressors of His people, whoever they may be.' The expression does, however, seem to point to three definite persons, though our knowledge of the history does not enable us to say who they are. We are equally unable to explain with certainty other historical allusions in the prophecy. In xi. 15–17, xiii. 7, however, the representation *may* be purely ideal: and it is at least not necessary to suppose any definite person to be referred to.

slaughter; whose [a] possessors slay them, and hold them- 5
selves not guilty; and they that sell them say, Blessed
be the LORD, for I am rich: and [b] their own shepherds
pity them not. For I will no more pity the in- 6

[a] Or, *buyers* [b] Or, *their shepherd pitieth*

Whatever, however, its historical occasion may have been, the general teaching of the prophecy remains sufficiently distinct. It teaches the consequences which may follow from the rejection of God's means of help. 'It is a solemn warning of the way in which Divine grace may be frustrated by human obstinacy. The truth which it conveys had been abundantly illustrated in the past history of Israel. It was to receive a more terrible illustration in the subsequent history of the nation' (Kirkp.).

4. The prophet is to enact the part of the ruler after God's own heart.

Thus said. Viz. at some time in the past.

Shepherd the flock of slaughter: i. e. the flock exposed to slaughter, as explained in *v.* 5. What is meant appears more clearly from *v.* 15 (where 'yet again' points back to the present verse): the prophet is to *act* the shepherd, to assume the garb and accoutrements, the staff, club, scrip, &c. of a shepherd.

5. The sheep in this flock are done to death by buyers and sellers; and receive no pity even from their own shepherds. Who the 'buyers' and 'sellers' are is uncertain: most probably, perhaps, some of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae, between whom, after B. C. 323 (pp. 231 f., 253) Israel was often exchanged, not indeed by actual barter, but by the issues of war, undertaken usually, on each side, with the hope of some gain. Or the 'sellers,' as they use the name Yahweh, may be unpatriotic native leaders, who played into the hands of the foreign 'buyers.' The shepherds are seemingly the native rulers, probably the high-priests, with those who assisted them in the management of the state.

possessors: better, **buyers** (marg.), as the context shows.

hold themselves not guilty: better, **are not held guilty** (Jer. ii. 3 RV.), i. e. are not punished for it: the entire clause is thus equivalent to, 'slay them with impunity.'

Blessed, &c. An exclamation, implying the satisfaction of the sellers at the good price which they have obtained.

their own shepherds, &c. RVm. is possible grammatically, but not favoured by the context (cf. *v.* 8).

6. The verse seems to be parenthetic (*v.* 7 continuing *v.* 5); and to give a second reason for the command of *v.* 4: this guidance is needed for Israel, *because* a period of anarchy is coming upon the earth.

habitants of the land, saith the LORD: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour's hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them.
7 So I fed the flock of slaughter, verily [a] the poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called [b] Beauty, and the other I called [c] Bands; and I fed the

[a] Or, *the most miserable of sheep* [b] Or, *Graciousness*
[c] Or, *Binders* Or, *Union*

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the land (twice). Rather, **the earth:** as the object of the command in *v.* 4 is to *rescue* the flock (Israel) from its cruel rulers, the land of Israel can hardly be referred to. For 'his neighbour' (רֵעֵהוּ) the parallelism with 'his king' strongly suggests that we should read 'his **shepherd**' (רֹעֵהוּ): the meaning will then be that Yahweh will deliver the nations to the ambition and caprice of their rulers. As Stade remarks, the expression would well suit the period *c.* 320–300 B. C., when Alexander's generals were contending for the possession of the countries conquered by him.

will deliver. Heb. *am delivering*, of the imminent future.

smite. Rather, **beat to pieces**; a strong word, used of beating to pieces an image, Dt. ix. 21; of *beating down* an enemy, Nu. xiv. 45 = Dt. i. 44; cf. 2 Chr. xv. 6 (read *beaten* for *broken*).

7. verily, &c. RVm. is better than RV., for the context shows that the reference is to the *whole* flock, and not merely to a part of it: but לכן nowhere else means 'verily'; and most probably, throwing two words into one, we should read, **for the traffickers of the flock.**; the prophet, though really he took the sheep away from their merciless owners, says ironically that he shepherded them *for them*.

And I took unto me two staves. Symbolizing the maxims of government, which he would adopt in his rule. The two 'staffs' are such as a shepherd still uses in the East, a short 'rod' (or rather, 'club') to ward off wild beasts, &c., and a longer 'staff' to lean upon in walking. Cf. Ps. xxiii. 4; and *DB*., s. v. 'ROD.'

Beauty. An extremely bad rendering: *no'am* means **pleasantness, sweetness,** or (RVm.) **graciousness:** see Prov. iii. 17, xv. 26, xvi. 24; and of Yahweh, Ps. xxvii. 4 (see RVm.), xc. 17. Cognate words in Arabic mean 'favour.' The 'graciousness' was shown (see *v.* 10) in the means taken to secure Israel from molestation by other nations.

Bands, *lit.* **Binders.** The other principle which he adopted was, in a word, *union*.

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GATH

flock. And I cut off the three shepherds in one month; 8
for my soul was weary of them, and their soul also loathed
me. Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, 9
let it die; and [a]that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off;
and let them which are left eat every one the flesh of
another. And I took my staff Beauty, and cut it asunder, 10
that I might break my covenant which I had made with
all the peoples. And it was broken in that day: and 11

[a] Or, *that that is lost, let it be lost*

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8. He cut off 'the three' pitiless 'shepherds' (*v.* 5) in 'one month.' The allusion seems to be to some incident of the time, now unknown to us. See the note above, p. 254.

one month. Perhaps not to be understood literally, but meaning a comparatively short time.

and—not 'for,' which is an illegitimate paraphrase—**I was impatient with them**; lit. *my soul was short with them*,—a Heb. metaphor for *to be impatient*: cf. Nu. xxi. 4 (RVm.), and with 'spirit' for 'soul,' Mic. ii. 7 (RVm.), Job xxi. 4 Heb.

with them. I. e. with the people, as is clear both from the preceding 'and,' and from *v.* 9. This and the next clause describe the failure of the good 'shepherd,' personated by the prophet, in his mission, and the mutual antipathy which sprang up between him and the people, even after he had removed their evil rulers.

9. The 'shepherd' accordingly leaves the people to their fate.

that dieth. I. e. that is *on the way to die.*

that that is to be cut off, &c. The marg. is a paraphrase of the more lit. rendering of the text.

and let them which are left, &c. I. e. let them destroy one another by internecine conflict.

10. The people thus rejecting his rule, the prophet breaks his staff, 'Graciousness,' to symbolize that Yahweh's favour towards them was at an end, and that the 'covenant' which he had (metaphorically) made with the nations that they should not molest Israel was now annulled. Though the expression is general ('*all* the peoples'), the peoples whom the prophet has specially in view are no doubt Israel's neighbours, the Philistines, Idumaeans, Samaritans, Ammonites, &c., who in the post-exilic period often caused Judah serious trouble. For the fig. application of the idea of a 'covenant,' cf. Hos. ii. 18, Ez. xxxiv. 25, Job v. 23.

11. By the fact that, as soon as the staff was broken, the 'covenant' of peace with the nations ceased likewise, the dealers of the sheep, who had been watching closely and suspiciously the

[a] thus [b] the poor of the flock that gave heed unto me
12 knew that it was the word of the LORD. And I said unto
them, If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not,
forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty *pieces* of
13 silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it [c] unto the
potter, the goodly price that I was prised at of them. And

[a] Or, *the poor of the flock . . . knew of a truth*

[b] Or, *the most miserable of sheep*

[c] The Syriac reads, *into the treasury.*

---

prophet's movements, perceived that he had been acting as Yahweh's agent.

and thus the poor of the flock: better (see on *v.* 7), **the most miserable of sheep.** But probably we should again read (with LXX *οἱ Χαναναῖοι*), *and* **the traffickers of** *the sheep* (כנעניי for כן עניי, כן here being as unidiomatic as לכן in *v.* 7).

gave heed unto. Or, **were watching** (1 S. i. 12; Eccl. xi. 4^a Heb.).

12–13. The prophet now asks for his wages; and receives from the people the paltry and insulting sum of thirty shekels of silver, the amount fixed in the 'Book of the Covenant' as the compensation for an injured slave (Ex. xxi. 32). As if to show that it was Yahweh Himself (whose representative the prophet is) whom they paid with so wretched a sum, he casts it, by divine command, into the Temple treasury.

12. unto them. I. e. to the sheep (people).

If ye think good, &c. Implying that he leaves it entirely to them to determine what they think his services are worth.

weighed: in accordance with ancient usage, Gen. xxiii. 16, 1 K. xx. 39 Heb., Jer. xxxii. 9 *al.*

pieces. It is better to supply 'shekels.' A shekel of silver was worth probably about 2*s.* 9*d.* (*DB.* iii. 420), so that thirty shekels would equal about £4 2*s.* 6*d.*

13. Cast it into the treasury. So we must clearly read, with the Pesh. and RVm. (האוצר for היוצר); notice especially 'in(to) Yahweh's house' at the end of the verse. The 'potter,' by those who adhere to this reading, is supposed to be mentioned as one of the lowest of the labouring classes, the maker of the commonest and cheapest of vessels, so that casting to the potter would be equivalent to throwing away; but this explanation is very far-fetched.

the goodly price. Better (cf. on *v.* 2), **the noble price.** Of course the expression is meant sarcastically.

that I was prised at. We., Now., Marti would read, *that thou wast prised at* (יקרת for יקרתי); but as the prophet represents Yahweh the sense remains substantially the same, I took the thirty *pieces* of silver, and cast them [a] unto the potter, in the house of the LORD. Then I cut asunder 14 mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet again 15

[a] The Syriac reads, *into the treasury.*

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of them. A weak and also incorrect rendering. The Heb. prep. is lit. *from upon* (see *Lex.* p. 759 [b]), and it is used here pregnantly, 'that I was prised at (and dismissed) from them.'

and cast them, &c. Render, in the order of the Heb., and as before with the Syriac, **and cast them into Yahweh's house, into the treasury.** For 'cast,' cf. 2 Chr. xxiv. 10.

Verse 13 is quoted (with variations from both the Heb. and the LXX) in Mt. xxvii. 9 f. (cf. also *v.* 12 [b] with Mt. xxvi. 15 [b]); and applied to the purchase of the potter's field with the money returned by Judas. Clearly, however, the context contains no reference to the future Messiah: so that cannot be the original intention of the passage. The Evangelist follows the exegetical methods current among the Jews of his time (cf. Mt. ii. 15, 18; and on ch. xiii. 7). See further, p. 282.

14. The prophet now breaks his second staff, 'Union,' to signify that the brotherhood between Judah and Israel was broken. By breaking both his staffs he shows that he will have nothing more to do with the ungrateful people: he leaves them to their fate. And what have they to expect, when friendly relations with their neighbours are at an end (*v.* 10), and there is no longer any unity among themselves?

and Israel. The mention of Israel is remarkable, as the reference is not, as ix. 10, 13, x. 6, 7, to an ideal future, but, as it seems, to the prophet's own time. If the text is correct, it seems that the growth of party-factions in the present must be represented (cf. Keil) as a revival of the ancient rivalries between the N. and S. kingdoms. Wellh. conjectured that 'Israel' was an error for 'Jerusalem,' comparing xii. 2 ff. and xiv. 14, which testify to the existence of antagonisms between the capital and the province of Judah in post-exilic times; and, as Nowack has pointed out, 'Jerusalem' is actually read by two MSS. of the LXX (according to Field, belonging to Lucian's recension). It is quite possible that this is the correct reading.

15–17. The prophet is now directed to personate the 'foolish shepherd,' who, as the people have rejected the good shepherd, will be raised up over them, and who will neglect the flock, or only use it for his own purposes, though in the end a just retri-

16 the instruments of a foolish shepherd. For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not [a] visit those that be [b] cut off, neither shall seek [c] those that be scattered, nor heal that that is broken; neither shall he feed that which [d] is sound, but he shall eat the flesh of
17 the fat, and shall tear their hoofs in pieces. Woe to the worthless shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall

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[a] Or, *miss* [b] Or, *lost* [c] Or, *the young* [d] Heb. *standeth.*

---

bution will overtake him. To judge from xiii. 7, the 'foolish shepherd' is pictured as a high-priest.

15. the instruments. I.e. garb and accoutrements, rod, club, scrip, &c., which in the present case must be pictured as worn out and useless. The word (כְּלִי) is a general one for articles of furniture or dress, armour, utensils, implements, &c.

16. visit. I.e. *look after* (Jer. xxiii. 2, also of sheep), which, if a thing is destroyed or lost, is equivalent to **miss** (RVm.): cf. 1 S. xxv. 7, 21; Jer. iii. 16 RVm. For the picture of the bad shepherd, cf. Ez. xxxiv. 4. On RVm. *lost*, see on *v.* 9.

those that be scattered. Something of this sort is no doubt intended (LXX, *τὸ ἐσκορπισμένον*, Jer. *dispersum*), though it cannot be extracted from the existing text. Perhaps we ought to read הַנִּדַּחַת *that which is driven away* (Now.) for הנער, as in Mic. iv. 6, Zeph. iii. 19, Ez. xxxiv. 4, 16; or הַנֶּעְדָּרָה *that which is lacking* (which would more nearly resemble הנער). RVm. (=AV.) is quite out of the question: the word might mean *the young man* (or *men*), but it is never used of the young of animals.

broken. I.e. wounded: see Ex. xxii. 9; Ez. xxxiv. 4, 16.

feed. Better, *sustain*, *nourish* (1 K. xvii. 4, 9). Not the word rendered *feed* (properly 'shepherd') in *vv.* 4, 7, 9.

eat the flesh, &c.: instead of caring for the sheep, preying upon them for his own benefit; cf. Ez. xxxiv. 2, 3.

tear their hoofs in pieces. Either (Ew., Hi.) by driving the sheep cruelly over stony places; or (Keil) devouring their very hoofs in his voracity.

17. The sentence on the foolish shepherd.

Woe to. Better, **Ah!** (Nah. iii. 1).

the worthless shepherd: lit. *the shepherd of nothingness*; cf. the same Heb. in Job xiii. 4 'physicians *of no value*.'

that leaveth the flock. Cf. John x. 12.

The sequel to this prophecy follows in xiii. 7–9, where see the notes.

be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

The [a] burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. **12**

[A^3] *Thus* saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him: Behold, I will make 2
Jerusalem a cup of reeling unto all the peoples round

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[a] Or, *oracle*

xii. 1—xiii. 6, xiv. The deliverance and glorious future of Jerusalem. The prophecy, like ix–xi, xiii. 7–9, will belong to the Greek period, but its exact date in it is uncertain.

(1) **xii. 1—xiii. 6.** The deliverance of Jerusalem from the attack of the heathen, its penitence for a great national crime, and its purification from all sin and uncleanness.

xii. 1–9. The prophet sees an assembly of nations, including *Judah*, advancing against Jerusalem (*vv.* 1–3); but their forces are smitten with a sudden panic (*v.* 4), and the chieftains of Judah, perceiving that Yahweh fights for Jerusalem, turn their arms against the other nations (*v.* 5 f.): the men of Judah are first victorious, and then they assist in saving the capital (*vv.* 7–9). The earlier prophets spoke of the actual nations, the Assyrians or Babylonians, who were hostile to Israel; the thought of an imagined attack of hostile nations in the future is an eschatological trait, suggested probably by Ez. xxxviii–xxxix (cf. pp. 233, 235).

1. The oracle of Yahweh's word, &c. See on ix. 1.

Thus **saith Yahweh.** One of the very few cases in which the prophetical formula, נאם יהוה (properly '('tis) Yahweh's whisper'), instead of being thrown in parenthetically, precedes the words spoken (Is. lvi. 8; Ps. cx. 1).

which stretcheth forth, &c. The epithets point to Yahweh as all-powerful, and therefore as able to bring about the events here foretold. Cf. Is. xlii. 5, xliv. 24.

2. I am making: i. e. am about to make; see on Nah. ii. 2.

a cup of reeling. Better, a **bowl** (Ex. xii. 22 'bason') **of reeling:** Jerusalem is figured as a vast bowl, large enough for many to drink from at once: the nations gather round it eager to taste its contents; but the draught intoxicates all who drink it and causes them to reel, or stagger back, confused and discomfited. Jerusalem, in other words, is represented as alluring the nations to their ruin. Cf. on Nah. iii. 11, Hab. ii. 15, 16, where the same

about, and [a] upon Judah also [b] shall it be in the siege
3 against Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in that day,
that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the
peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall be sore
wounded; and all the nations of the earth shall be
4 gathered together against it. In that day, saith the LORD,
I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider
with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house

[a] Or, *against* [b] Or, *shall it fall* to be

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figure of intoxication is used of the paralysing effects of a great calamity upon a nation.

the peoples round about. I. e., more particularly, Israel's neighbours, the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, &c.

and upon (or **against**) **Judah,** &c. A very difficult and uncertain clause. In RV. 'it' is best taken to mean (Keil) what has just been described (*v.* 2^{a}): this will fall upon Judah as well as upon Jerusalem. But the thought is not expressed at all naturally. RVm. has 'and upon Judah also shall it fall (to be),' &c., i. e. it will be incumbent upon Judah, Judah also will be obliged to take part in the siege against Jerusalem. This would agree with the sequel; but the absence of 'to be' in the Heb. is an objection to it. The same sense would be better obtained by the omission (We., Now., Marti) of על ('upon'), 'And Judah also will be in the siege against Jerusalem,' but, as Marti points out, היה במצור means elsewhere not 'to take part in a siege,' but 'to be besieged' (Ez. iv. 3). Marti himself cuts the knot by reading (partly with LXX), 'and there shall be a siege against Jerusalem.'

3. a burdensome stone. A stone so heavy that those who attempt to lift it only wound and lacerate themselves in the process. The expression may be borrowed from the custom which Jerome says prevailed in Palestine in his time, of young men testing their strength against one another by the height they were able to lift (not to 'throw') stones of great weight.

wounded. Better, **lacerated.** The word occurs besides only in Lev. xxi. 5, where it is used of *making incisions* in oneself, or tattooing oneself, in mourning.

4–6. Yahweh strikes with a panic all the besiegers, except Judah, who, perceiving thus that God is on the side of Jerusalem, turns to her help, and proceeds to attack the other assailants.

4. will smite . . . with astonishment . . . with madness . . . with blindness. A reminiscence of Dt. xxviii. 28.

open mine eyes upon. I. e. regard with favour: cf.

of Judah, and will smite every horse of the peoples with
blindness. And the chieftains of Judah shall say in their 5
heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in
the LORD of hosts their God. In that day will I make 6
the chieftains of Judah like a pan of fire among wood,
and like a torch of fire among sheaves; and they shall
devour all the peoples round about, on the right hand and
on the left: and Jerusalem shall yet again dwell in her
own place, even in Jerusalem. The LORD also shall save 7

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1 K. viii. 29; Jer. xl. 4 (Heb. 'I will set my eye upon thee').

5. Judah will thus be brought to recognize that Jerusalem, instead of being its foe, is in reality its natural ally, and a source of strength to it, through being under the protection of its God.

the chieftains. More exactly (see on ix. 7), **the clan-chiefs.** We., Now., Marti would read **the clans** (אַלְפֵי for אַלֻּפֵי, as in ix. 7): the sense, however, remains substantially the same; for the 'clan-chiefs' are naturally regarded as representing the corresponding 'clans.'

6. Judah now destroys the other assailants: they are as powerless against her as a heap of faggots, or a shock of corn, against the flames.

the chieftains. As before, **the clan-chiefs.** Or, making again the same change in the punctuation, **the clans.**

shall yet again dwell. Or, *sit*, i.e. be again a flourishing and prosperous city: see on ii. 4; and cf. xiv. 10.

even in Jerusalem. There is no 'even' in the Heb.; and 'in Jerusalem' (which is unsuitable after 'Jerusalem shall sit') is doubtless to be omitted, with nineteen MSS. of LXX.

7. 'The glory of the victory is first Judah's, so that the house of David may not have too much fame, or boast over the country districts. The writer doubtless alludes to some temporary schism between the capital and the country caused by the arrogance of the former. But we have no means of knowing when this took place. It must often have been imminent in the days both before and especially after the Exile, when Jerusalem had absorbed all the religious privilege and influence of the nation' (G. A. Smith, pp. 478 f.)[1].

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[1] We., Now. regard the verse as an interpolation, dating from the Maccabaean age. In *vv.* 4, 6 Judah is not represented as being in

the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of
David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem be
8 not magnified above Judah. In that day shall the LORD
defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he [a] that is
feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the
house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD
9 before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that
I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against
10 Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David,

[a] Or, *that stumbleth*

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the house of David. I. e. members of David's family, who no doubt took a prominent and influential place in Jerusalem in post-exilic times. Cf. *vv.* 8 (where see the note), 10, 12, xiii. 1; Ezr. viii. 2; 1 Chr. iii. 17–24.

8. The inhabitants of Jerusalem will be supernaturally strengthened to overcome the foe.

he that is feeble. *Lit.* as marg., **he that stumbleth**, he who from weakness cannot stand firm upon his feet: cf. 1 S. ii. 4, Ps. cv. 37, 2 Chr. xxviii. 15, Is. xxxv. 3,—in all which passages the Heb. verb is the same as here.

as David. Named as the type of a brave and dauntless warrior (1 S. xvii. 34 ff.; 2 S. xvii. 8).

the house of David. The existing representatives of the ancient royal house,—perhaps (We., Now.) used here in an enlarged sense to denote the government generally (cf. Ps. cxxii. 5). These will be strengthened, so as to be comparable even to *God*, or a divine being,—and *Yahweh's angel*, the powerful protector (Ps. xxxiv. 7) and leader of His people (with 'before them,' cf. Gen. xxiv. 7, Ex. xiv. 19, xxiii. 20, 23, xxxii. 34). With the comparison to Yahweh's angel in general, cf. 1 S. xxix. 9, 2 S. xiv. 17, 20, xix. 27.

10–14. After this triumph, the whole nation, every family by itself, from the noblest downwards, holds a great lamentation over a martyr 'whom they have pierced.'

10. The house of David and inhabitants of Jerusalem is

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any need of help or deliverance; on the contrary, it is Judah which delivers Jerusalem. The representation, however, suits the situation in the Maccabaean period, when the deliverance of Jerusalem and of the cities of Judaea did not come from Jerusalem, but was effected by means of the Maccabees from Modin (1 Macc. ii).

and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto [a] me whom

[a] According to some MSS., *him*.

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a comprehensive expression, intended to include the entire people, under the two categories of the rulers and the ruled. Upon these Yahweh will then **pour a spirit of grace and supplication** (or **grace-seeking,** the Heb. word being cognate with that for 'grace'), i.e. a spirit eager to obtain 'grace' or favour, and impelling to supplicate for it,—the 'favour' meant here being forgiveness for the great sin which they have committed. 'Spirit,' in Heb., in passages such as the present, signifies an *impulse*, the genitive following denoting its character, as Nu. v. 14 a spirit of jealousy, Dt. xxxiv. 9 of wisdom, Is. xix. 14 of perverseness, xxviii. 6 of judgement, xxix. 10 of deep sleep, Hos. iv. 12 of whoredom. The 'spirit' may be regarded as sent from Yahweh, and therefore as in a sense Divine; but it is not *the* Divine spirit, even where Yahweh is expressly named as its author, as Is. xix. 14, xxix. 10 (where it is used in a bad sense) sufficiently show. For 'pour out,' cf. Ez. xxxix. 29 (of Yahweh's spirit to be poured out upon Israel in the future after its deliverance from the ideal assault of nations under Gog), Joel ii. 28–29.

and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced. The words describe the effect of the 'spirit,' eager to obtain Yahweh's favour and forgiveness: they will *look upon* him whom they had pierced, with grief and penitence. The passage is, however, one of those which our ignorance of the circumstances of the time makes it impossible to interpret as a whole satisfactorily or completely. As the text stands, the speaker must, of course, be Yahweh, and it is, no doubt, perfectly true that 'the Jews had pierced Him metaphorically by their rebellion and ingratitude throughout their history. They pierced Him, literally and as the crowning act of their contumacy, in the Person of His Son upon the Cross, John xix. 37' (T. T. Perowne). But these considerations do not explain the passage here. However true in themselves, and however remarkable an anticipation of the literal piercing of Christ the words may be, neither the Israelites' rejection of Yahweh in the past, nor their rejection of Christ in the future, can be referred to here; not only does the context point plainly to some historical event in the prophet's own time, for which the people would eventually feel the sorrow here described (*vv.* 10ᵇ–14), but the Jews, as a nation (*vv.* 12–14), certainly never felt any grief or remorse for the death of Christ. Accepting the text as it stands, the meaning can only be that, in the murder or martyrdom referred to, Yahweh had been thrust through in the person of His representative. But as Kirkpatrick remarks (p. 468), 'The

they have pierced: and they shall mourn for him, as one
mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for
11 him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that
day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the

difficulty of the text is very great. Could the prophet have spoken of *thrusting Yahweh through*? The construction, too, excites suspicion.' The reading of the marg. (some fifty MSS., Ew., Smith) implies only אליו for אלי, and seems required by the following clause. Even so, however, the Heb. remains peculiar[1]; and We., Now., Marti conjecture that something has either fallen out, or been intentionally omitted, from the text ('and they shall look unto . . . whom they have pierced'). But whoever the martyr or godly counsellor alluded to may have been, his rejection by the Jews is undoubtedly a striking type of their rejection of Christ afterwards[2].

and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth, &c. A very inadequate rendering: we may 'mourn' in silent grief, but ספד is to *wail*, in loud and passionate grief. Render, *and they shall* **wail** *for him, as one* **waileth** *for an only son*—mentioned like that for the firstborn in the parallel clause as an instance of particularly poignant and bitter grief. Cf. Am. viii. 10 (where 'mourning' is correct), Jer. vi. 26 (where, for consistency, *lamentation* should be *wailing*); also, for 'wail,' on Zech. vii. 5.

11. Render, *In that day* **the wailing** *in Jerusalem* **shall be**

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[1] The את before אשר, resuming loosely another prep. The construction is strange, and against analogy; but there are isolated parallels in Jer. xxxviii. 9, Ez. xiv. 22^b, xxxvii. 19^b.

[2] LXX, misreading דקרו as רקדו (*leapt* or *danced*), have the strange rend. *καὶ ἐπιβλέψονται πρός μέ, ἀνθ' ὧν* (strictly = תחת אשר, but probably here a loose rend. of את אשר) *κατωρχήσαντο* 'because they *insulted*' (lit. *danced down*; see Hdt. iii. 151). This rendering was early discovered to be faulty; and so it was corrected by Aq., Symm., and Theod. (who has *καὶ ἐπιβλέψονται πρὸς μὲ εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν*), and in Lucian's text of the LXX (*εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν*), as also in the version followed in John xix. 37 (*ὄψονται εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν*) and alluded to in Rev. i. 7 (*καὶ ὄψεται αὐτὸν πᾶς ὀφθαλμός, καὶ οἵτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν, καὶ κόψονται ἐπ' αὐτὸν πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς*, where the last clause *καὶ κόψονται κ.τ.λ.* is evidently based upon what follows here in Zech.,—in LXX *καὶ κόψονται ἐπ' αὐτόν*, and then *καὶ κόψεται ἡ γῆ κατὰ φυλὰς φυλάς*). But of course the *application* made of an O. T. passage in the Revelation is, in view of the way in which reminiscences of the O. T. are woven into it, no conclusive evidence as to its *original* reference or intention.

mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

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great, like the wailing *of* [or *for*] *Hadadrimmon in the* **plain** *of Megiddon.* It is obvious that some occasion of great public lamentation is referred to; but what it is, is uncertain. The name 'Hadadrimmon' does not occur elsewhere; but so far as the form goes it might be that of either (1) a place, or (2) a deity. 'Hadad' (also in the proper names Hadad, Ben-hadad, Hadadezer), and 'Rimmon,' or properly *Rammān* (also 2 K. v. 18; in Tab-rimmon, 1 K. xv. 18, and in some place-names, cf. ch. xiv. 10), were respectively the Syrian and Assyrian names of the same deity, the god of rain, storm, and thunder (see *DB.* 'RIMMON'; more fully Zimmern in *KAT.*^{3} 442 ff.): hence, (1) 'Rimmon' being originally the name of a place where this deity was worshipped, 'Hadad of Rimmon' (like 'Baal of Peor') might have come to be the fuller name of the same place; or (2) 'Hadad-Rimmon' may have been in use as a compound name of the deity himself. (1) From Targ. and Pesh. onwards Hadadrimmon has commonly been taken as the name of the place,—according to Jerome, a city near Jezreel in the plain of Megiddo, called in his day Maximianopolis,—at which Josiah was bewailed after his death at Megiddo (2 K. xxiii. 29 f.): the Chronicler also tells us (2 Chr. xxxv. 25) that dirges (קִינוֹת) in memory of Josiah were recited even to his own time (*c.* 300–250 B.C.). Upon this view, Hadadrimmon has been identified with *Rummaneh*, a place about four miles SSE. of Megiddo. It is, however, very doubtful whether this explanation is correct: Josiah, we are told, after his death was carried at once by his servants to Jerusalem, which was the natural place for the public lamentation in his honour to be held: the situation of Rummaneh does not suit other ancient notices of Maximianopolis (see Buhl, *Geogr.* p. 209); and Jerome's statement is open to the suspicion of being based upon nothing more than the occurrence of the same expression, 'in the plain of Megiddo,' in 2 Chr. xxxv. 22. (2) 'Hadadrimmon' has been taken by various recent scholars as the name of a *deity*. There was a Syrian and Phoenician deity called Tammuz, known to the Greeks as Adonis ('lord'), in the Greek legend a beautiful youth, killed by a boar, and bitterly bewailed by his spouse Aphrodite, in whose rites lamentations and weeping played a prominent part (see Ez. viii. 14). Now, as both Hadad and Tammuz were worshipped in the Phoenician city of Byblus, it has been conjectured that the two deities may have been amalgamated or confused, so that there may have been a 'wailing *for* Hadadrimmon,' analogous to that for Tammuz. No positive confirmation of this conjecture has, however, as yet been discovered. See further the full discussion by Baudissin, in *PRE.*^{3} vii. (1899), *s. v.*

Megiddon: on the SW. edge of the great Plain of Esdraelon.

12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family
of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the
family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives
13 apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their
wives apart; the family of the Shimeites apart, and their
14 wives apart; all the families that remain, every family
apart, and their wives apart.

13 In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the
house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for
2 sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in

12–14. The wailing will be universal, but not confused or disorderly; every family, the sexes apart, will form itself into a separate group. As examples, the prophet singles out the kingly and priestly families; and at the same time takes a subordinate branch in each, for the purpose of showing how the wailing is to extend to every subdivision of the entire nation.

12. shall mourn. Render: **shall wail.**

the family of the house of David. The family comprising the representatives of the line of the kings.

the family of the house of Nathan. Probably the son of David, mentioned in 2 S. v. 14; 1 Chr. iii. 5, xiv. 4; Luke iii. 31.

13. the family of the house of Levi. I. e. the main priestly family descended from Levi.

the family of Shimei. Probably a subordinate line, which traced its descent to the grandson of Levi mentioned in Nu. iii. 21.

14. All other families in the land will do similarly.

xiii. 1–6. Henceforth a fountain for purification from sin is permanently opened in Jerusalem; and all idolatry and degraded prophecy are exterminated from the land. For the thought of the removal, or forgiveness, of sin in the ideal future see on ch. iii. 9. The promise of *v.* 1 follows suitably upon the penitence described in xii. 10–14.

1. there shall be . . . opened. Not the simple future, but the substantive verb and the participle (LXX ἔσται . . . διανοιγόμενος), implying that the fountain is to be continuously open.

to the house of David, &c. I. e. to the entire population of Jerusalem: cf. on xii. 10.

for sin: cf. Nu. viii. 7 '*the water of sin*' (EVV. *of expiation*).

and for impurity. The Heb. *niddāh* is a technical term of the Levitical law, used especially of the ceremonial uncleanness occasioned by menstruation, Lev. xii. 2, xv. 19, Ez. xviii. 6, xxii. 10, xxxvi. 17 [RV. in Ez. wrongly 'separation'], or by con-

that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the
names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more
be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and
the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. And it shall 3
come to pass that, when any shall yet prophesy, then his
father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him,
Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of
the Lord: and his father and his mother that begat him
shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. And it 4
shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be
ashamed every one of his vision, when he prophesieth;
neither shall they wear a hairy mantle to deceive: but he 5

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tact with a corpse, Nu. xix. 9 [see RVm.], 13, 20, 21, xxxi. 23, and occasionally also in a more general sense, as 2 Chr. xxix. 5 [RV. 'filthiness'], Ezr. ix. 11. The prophet, on the ground, no doubt, of the ceremonial lustrations with the 'water of [i. e. for removing] impurity,' as prescribed in Nu. xix, pictures a fountain in Jerusalem, providing a continuous supply of water for the removal of all impurity from the people. Cf. Ez. xxxvi. 25.

2-6. The effects of the new life, thus (*v.* 1) infused into the community: the cessation of idolatry and degraded prophecy.

2. cut off . . . remembered: a reminiscence of Hos. ii. 17 (RVm.).

the prophets. In general: not merely 'false' prophets. Prophecy, when the author wrote, must have become degraded, and prophets must have been either (Wellh.) public demagogues, or (G. A. Smith) mere professional and mercenary oracle-mongers. The author himself would be distinguished from such, by being a *writing* prophet, perhaps also by writing anonymously.

the unclean spirit. Rather, **the spirit of uncleanness,** i. e. the spirit, or impulse (cf. on xii. 10), leading men to it.

3. If any one comes forward as a prophet, his own parents will be prepared not merely to disown him, but even to put him to death, so convinced will they be that he can be only an impostor. Cf. Dt. xiii. 6-10 (where, if any one attempts to seduce his countrymen into idolatry, his nearest relations are to be the first to come forward and stone him to death), xviii. 20 (death to be the punishment of the false prophet).

4. Even the prophets themselves will be ashamed of their visions, and will hasten to give up such a discredited profession.

a hairy mantle. A 'mantle' was the distinctive garb of a

shall say, I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the ground;
6 for I have been made a bondman from my youth. And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds between thine [a] arms? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my [b] friends.

[a] Heb. *hands*. [b] Or, *lovers*

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prophet (1 K. xix. 13, 19, 2 K. ii. 8); this passage and 2 K. i. 8 (RVm.) show further that it was of hair,—whether a sheep's skin (LXX, of Elijah's mantle, μηλωτή), or woven of camel's hair, like that worn by John the Baptist (Mt. iii. 4). Here the 'hairy mantle' is in particular a mark of the prophet of the degraded professional type referred to above, which had fallen into disrepute.

5. One who had once been a prophet will disclaim his profession, and own only to having been a tiller of the soil.

for I have been made a bondman. Lit. *for man has made* (others) *buy me = caused me to be bought*,—a singular expression, which occurs nowhere else. Wellh.'s clever emendation is extremely probable: *for* **the land has been my possession** (אדמה קנני for אדם הקנני) *from my youth*.

6. But the wounds on his person seem to contradict his claim to be a mere tiller of the soil; so he has to own that they are the blows which he received from his friends, when they went about to kill him (cf. *v.* 3), on account of his coming forward as a prophet.

between thine hands (RVm.). A peculiar expression, meaning, as is generally supposed, *on thy breast* (cf. 'between his arms,' i. e. on his back, 2 K. ix. 24, 'between your eyes,' i. e. on your foreheads, Dt. xiv. 1), or possibly (We.), which are *before thee*, which thou canst not deny.

friends. The Heb. is the ptcp. of the intensive conjug. (Piel), which elsewhere means *lovers* (RVm.), or paramours, a term used by Hosea of the Baals (Hos. ii. 5, 7, 10, 12, 13), and by other prophets of foreign allies (Jer. xxii. 20, 22, xxx. 14 *al.*), whose favour and help Israel or Judah courted. Hence the answer has been supposed to be a confession by the prophet of former idolatries, the 'wounds' being those which were self-inflicted in the service of the false gods alluded to (cf. 1 K. xviii. 28). The passive, *was smitten*, is however against this interpretation; and a reference to idolatry is foreign to the context: it is the prophet in general, not the prophet of false gods, who is represented in the context as discredited. It seems, therefore, that the word must here denote the prophet's 'friends,' who sought to kill him, for the reason stated above.

[A²] Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against 7
the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite
the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will
turn mine hand upon the little ones. And it shall come 8

7-9. The close of the prophecy xi. 4-17. It must be obvious that the passage is out of connexion both with xiii. 1-6 and with ch. xiv, whereas it is connected with xi. 4-17 not only by the figure of the shepherd and the flock, but also by the fact that xi. 15-17 supplies the reason why the 'shepherd' of *v.* 7 is to be smitten, which conversely appears nowhere either in ch. xii or in xiii. 1-6. Since Ewald, who first pointed out that xiii. 7-9 supplied the natural close to xi. 4-17, this view of it has been generally accepted by critical commentators.

The passage describes the ultimate fate of the 'foolish shepherd' of xi. 15-17, and of his flock: the 'shepherd' will be smitten, and the 'sheep,' who had rejected (xi. 12-14) the ruler after Yahweh's own heart, will be scattered: but a portion will be left in the land; and these, after being purified by severe trials, will form the nucleus of the future faithful people of God.

7. The sword is personified, as Jer. xlvii. 6, 7.

my shepherd. The 'foolish shepherd' of xi. 15-17, called 'Yahweh's shepherd,' in so far as, however unworthy, he stands officially at the head of Yahweh's people.

the man that is my fellow. The high-priest. The titles of honour applied to the 'foolish shepherd' throw into the greater relief his abuse of the office that he holds, and his unfitness for it (xi. 16). The word rendered 'fellow' is an uncommon one, and occurs besides only Lev. vi. 2 (Heb. v. 21) twice, xviii. 20, xix. 11, 15, 17, xxiv. 19, xxv. 14 twice, 15, 17 (EVV. 'neighbour,' 'another').

smite. The verb in the Heb. is masc., so the unnamed foe, not the sword, must be addressed. LXX (B א) read the plural, *πατάξατε*, though most MSS. have the sing. *πάταξον*: three have *πατάξω* 'I will smite' (אכה for הך), a reading followed also in the quotation, Mt. xxvi. 31. This agrees with the following 'I will turn' and is probably right: the sword is directed by Yahweh Himself.

The words are quoted in Mt. xxvi. 31 with reference to the dispersion of the disciples after the betrayal of Christ; but, as the context shows (see esp. *v.* 8 f.), that cannot be their original intention: rather, we must suppose, they are quoted, without regard to their original import, as a description in Old Testament phraseology of a New Testament fact: see similar cases in Mt. ii. 15, 18, xiii. 14 f., 35, xv. 8, Rom. viii. 36, ix. 25 f., x. 18, and elsewhere.

turn mine hand upon. Or, **against,** viz. in judgement: see the same expression in Am. i. 8, Is. i. 25, Ps. lxxxi. 14.

to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be
9 left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

14 [A^4] Behold, a day of the LORD cometh, when thy

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the little ones. Viz. of the flock: cf. Jer. xlix. 20 = l. 45.

8, 9. The prophet here deserts the figure of the flock, and speaks literally. Two-thirds of the people will perish, but one-third will survive: this, after having been further purified by severe trials, will form the loyal and devoted people of God. The doctrine of the purification of Israel through a judgement, and the preservation of a faithful remnant, is pre-eminently Isaiah's: see on Zeph. iii. 11.

The 'third part' may be a thought suggested by Ez. v. 2, 12.

9. through the fire. Fig. of severe trial, as Is. xliii. 2, Ps. lxvi. 12.

and will smelt them as silver is smelted, and try them as gold is tried. Both figures of testing by severe trial, and removing, if they exist, ignoble elements. Cf. Is. i. 25 'and *smelt away* as in a furnace [כַּבֹּר, Is. xlviii. 10] thy dross'; Jer. vi. 29 'in vain the *smelter smelteth*, for the evil are not separated,' ix. 7 'Behold, I will *smelt* them, and *try* them'; Ps. lxvi. 10 'For thou hast *tried* us, O God, thou hast *smelted* us, as silver is *smelted*.'

they shall call on my name, and I will answer them. A mark of the changed relations between them and God: they will be forward to call upon Him, and He will be ready to answer them (cf. Is. lviii. 9, lxv. 24). 'To call *on*,' both here and elsewhere, is properly 'to call *with*,' i.e. to use the name in invocations.

I will say, &c. Another sign of the mutual harmony and cordiality established between the purified remnant and Yahweh; cf. Hos. ii. 23; also ch. viii. 8.

xiv. The deliverance of Jerusalem from the heathen: and its elevation into a centre of monotheism for the world. Another assault upon Jerusalem is here described. The nations this time *capture* the city, and half of its population is taken into captivity (*vv.* 1, 2): Yahweh next appears, in order to fight against the assailants, and rescue the remainder; He stands upon the Mount of Olives, which is rent in sunder beneath Him by an earthquake, and through the chasm the fugitives escape (*vv.* 3–5). Thereupon

spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will 2
gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the
city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women
ravished: and half of the city shall go forth into captivity,
and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the
city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against 3
those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.
And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of 4
Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the
mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward
the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very

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the Messianic age commences: the light is perpetual, and the air is serene (*vv.* 6 f.): the territory of Judah sinks and becomes a well-watered plain, Jerusalem alone retaining its former elevation, conspicuous from afar, a goal to the nations for their annual pilgrimage at the feast of Booths, and holy entirely to Yahweh (*vv.* 8-21). The prophecy is largely in substance a *résumé* of older prophecies of a glorious future, combined into a single picture, and expected to be shortly fulfilled (notice 'is coming' in *v.* 1).

1. Behold, a day is coming for Yahweh. A day when He will manifest Himself in judgement. Cf. on Zeph. i. 7.

and thy spoil, &c. The pronouns in the Heb. are fem., showing that Jerusalem is addressed. The prophet, instead of adhering to strict chronological order, and beginning with a description of the assault and capture of the city, starts with a picture of the enemy partitioning their spoil in the midst of it.

2. all nations. The expression shows that the prophet has in view an *ideal* attack upon the Holy City: cf. on xii. 1.

rifled. The word generally rendered *spoiled* (Is. xiii. 16).

ravished. The usual concomitant of the sack of a city in ancient times: cf. again Is. xiii. 16.

3. Yahweh will appear, to fight against the assailants, and secure the safety of that half of the population which still remained in the city (*v.* 2 *end*).

fought. Better, **fighteth**, viz. on whatever the occasion may be.

battle. Not the usual Heb. word, but an Aramaic word, found elsewhere only Ps. lv. 18 (?; see RVm.), 21, lxviii. 30, lxxviii. 9, cxliv. 1, Job xxxviii. 23, Eccl. ix. 18 (in 2 S. xvii. 11 read *in their midst* with LXX, Pesh., Vulg.).

4. shall cleave. Cf. the pictures of the mountains quaking or melting before Yahweh, Jud. v. 5, Nah. i. 5, Ps. xcvii. 5.

great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove
5 toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And
[a] ye shall flee [b] by the valley of [c] my mountains; for the
valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azel: yea, ye
shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in
the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God
6 shall come, and all the holy ones with thee. And it shall

[a] Or, as otherwise read, *the valley of my mountains shall be stopped*

[b] Or, *to* [c] Or, *the*

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5. Through the chasm thus made in the mountain, the people still remaining in Jerusalem (*v.* 2 b) will escape.

to the valley: the cleft, running from W. to E., described in *v.* 4. *My mountains* and *the mountains*, if the text is sound, must be the mountains just formed, by the Mount of Olives being cleft in twain. LXX, Targ., Symm., and the Oriental MSS. of the Hebrew text, read for the first 'and ye shall flee,' &c. 'and the valley of my mountains *shall be stopped up*' (וְנִסְתַּם for וְנַסְתֶּם). The avoidance of the double 'and ye shall flee' is some improvement; but otherwise this reading has no advantage over the Heb., nor does it agree with the next clause, even though with We. we alter further and read, 'And the valley of *Hinnom* shall be stopped up.' Marg.c (so Targ., Syr.) requires a change of text.

to Azel. An otherwise unmentioned locality,—presumably some place beyond the Mount of Olives, on the east.

the earthquake, &c. The one mentioned in the title of the Book of Amos (Am. i. 1), *c.* 750 B. C. The allusion is probably an archaistic trait: for a living memory of an event which happened some 400 years previously could hardly have been current among the people.

and Yahweh, &c. Yahweh, attended by all His angels (read with LXX, 'with *him*' for 'with thee'), will now 'come,' i. e. apparently come nearer, or enter Jerusalem, to complete the defeat of His foes, and establish His kingdom. The picture, as elsewhere in the prophets (cf. Joel iii. 14–16), is in parts incomplete: it is not said, for example, what happens afterwards to those who escape through the cleft in the Mount of Olives.

the holy ones. I. e. the *angels*, as Job v. 1, Ps. lxxxix. 5, 7, Dan. iv. 13, viii. 13.

6–7. In the glorious future, then to begin, there will be no extremes of temperature, and perpetual light will prevail. Cf. Is. iv. 6, xxx. 26, lx. 20; also Rev. xxii. 5, 2 Esdr. vii. 39–42.

6. A very uncertain verse. RV. (based on the Heb. marg.) is

come to pass in that day, that [a] the light shall not be
[b] with brightness and with gloom: but it shall be one day 7
which is known unto the Lord; not day, and not night:
but it shall come to pass, that at evening time there shall

[a] Another reading is, *there shall not be light, the bright ones shall contract themselves.*

[b] According to some ancient versions, *but cold and frost.*

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very improbable[1]: *the glorious ones*[2] *will be thickened* (condensed, or congealed) is a possible rendering of the Heb. text, but yields a poor and doubtful sense[3]: the statement 'there shall *not* be light' seems also to conflict with *v.* 7 *end.* Perhaps We., Now., Marti are right in reading, *there shall be neither* **heat** (חום for אור) *nor* **cold** (וְקָרוּת for יְקָרוֹת: so LXX, Syr., Targ., Symm., Vulg.) *nor* **frost** (וְקִפָּאוֹן: so Heb. marg., and the same versions: cf. the cogn. verb, Ex. xv. 8), i. e. there will be no extremes of heat and cold, the day will be of an equable temperature (cf. 2 Esdr. vii. 41).

6. And it shall be one day (i. e. one long continuous day); **it** (emph.) **is known to Yahweh,** i. e. either known to Him, but not to us (Dt. xxix. 29), or (Keil) noted or regarded by Him above other days.

not day, and not night, &c. I. e. with no interchange of light and darkness, but wholly light: even at nightfall there will be still light. Cf. Is. lx. 20.

7. A further trait. Perennial streams flowing E. and W. of Jerusalem will irrigate and fertilize the whole land. The greater part of Judah, except for occasional wells, is practically waterless (Smith, *Hist. Geogr. of the Holy Land*, p. 307): the high central part is mostly a stony moorland; rounded and barren limestone hills line many of the wádys; the descent to Jordan and the Dead Sea is down stony wádys, or over the rocky and desolate 'wilderness of Judah.' Hence the prophets picture its irrigation in the ideal future by copious streams. Cf. Is. xxx. 25; and esp.

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[1] 'Brightness' and 'gloom' are philological *tours de force.*

[2] From the sense borne by the root in Aramaic (where it often corresponds to the Heb. כבד and derivatives): e. g. Ps. xxiv. 8 Targ. 'the king of *glory*,' Dt. xxviii. 58 Targ. 'the *glorious* name.'

[3] It is supposed to mean *the stars* (cf. the same word *glorious* of the moon in Job xxxi. 36) *will draw in their light*; but the metaph. use of *thickened* is very doubtful (see how the word is actually used, Ex. xv. 8, Zeph. i. 12, Job x. 10), and there is also a grammatical anomaly (see, however, Is. xlix. 11, and G.-K. § 146 u). RVm. is a questionable paraphrase of this.

8 be light. And it shall come to pass in that day, that
living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them
toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the
9 western sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And
the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day
10 shall the LORD be one, and his name one. All the land
shall be turned as the Arabah, from Geba to Rimmon

Ez. xlvii, the source no doubt both of the representation here and of Joel iii. 18: also Rev. xxii. 1 f.

living waters. I. e., as regularly in Heb., *moving*, **running** waters: see Gen. xxvi. 19 RVm.; Lev. xiv. 5 RVm., &c.

the eastern (*lit.* the *front*) **sea.** I. e. the Dead Sea. So Ez. xlviii. 17; Joel ii. 20. In fixing the quarters of the heavens the Hebrews thought of themselves as turning towards the East.

the western (*lit.* the *hinder*) **sea.** I. e. the Mediterranean Sea. So Dt. xi. 24, xxxiv. 2; Joel ii. 20.

in summer, &c. The streams will be perennial: they will not, like many of the streams in Palestine, fail in the hot summers.

9. Yahweh will then be the one King, and the one God, of the whole earth.

shall Yahweh be one, and his name one. Universal monotheism will prevail: Yahweh, the true God, will no longer be confused with other gods; there will no longer be gods bearing many names: Yahweh will be everywhere recognized as one, and all worship will be Yahweh-worship.

10. The territory of Judah generally,—which is mostly a mountainous country, rising up gradually from the Mediterranean Sea on the W., and more precipitously from the Dead Sea (1,292 feet below the Mediterranean Sea) on the E., to the central ridge (in which Jerusalem is 2,500 feet, and Hebron 3,000 feet, above the Mediterranean Sea),—will then sink and become a plain, Jerusalem alone remaining at its former elevation, and so rising majestically out of it. The physical elevation of Jerusalem is a material expression of the spiritual pre-eminence of the religion of Zion; and is a trait pretty clearly derived from Is. ii. 2 f. = Mic. iv. 1 f. (where the Temple hill, exalted above other mountains, and visible from afar, attracts the gaze of distant nations, and is the goal of their pilgrimages).

as the ‘Arābāh. I. e. like the level floor of the great trough or depression through which the Jordan flows (Dt. i. 1 RVm.), once, in ages long before the appearance of man upon the globe, the site of an inland sea, the deposits from which formed originally the floor of the ‘Arābāh.

south of Jerusalem; and she shall be lifted up, and shall dwell in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananel unto the king's winepresses. And men shall 11 dwell therein, and there shall be no more [a] curse; but

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[a] Or, *ban*

Geba'. Now *Jeba*, 6 miles NE. of Jerusalem, on the S. edge of the steep Wády Suweinit (cf. 1 S. xiii. 3, 16, xiv. 5); mentioned in 2 K. xxiii. 8 as a point on the S. border of the Northern kingdom, and here as one on the N. border of Judah.

Rimmon. No doubt, the place called 'En-Rimmon ('Rimmon's spring') in Neh. xi. 29, and the corrected text of Jos. xv. 32, xix. 7, 1 Chr. iv. 32; probably the modern *Umm er-rumāmīn*, 9 miles N. of Beer-sheba, and about 35 miles SW. of Jerusalem.

dwell. Or, *sit*, i. e. be inhabited; cf. xii. 6.

from Benjamin's gate. This was a gate leading into the territory of Benjamin (see Jer. xxxvii. 13, and cf. *v.* 12); it must have been consequently in the N. wall of the city; from the present passage it may be inferred that it was at the E. end of this wall. The 'gate of Ephraim' (2 K. xiv. 13; Neh. viii. 16, xii. 39), with which it has been identified, seems to have been more nearly at the centre of the N. wall.

the first gate. Obscure: perhaps the same as the 'corner gate.' Or perhaps **the former gate** (note 'the place of'), i. e. some gate disused at the time when the prophet wrote.

the corner gate (2 K. xiv. 13; 2 Chr. xxvi. 9; Jer. xxxi. 38): this was 400 cubits (700 feet) to the W. of the gate of Ephraim (2 K. *l. c.*), and stood no doubt at the NW. corner of the city.

and from the tower of Ḥănan'ēl. To judge from Neh. iii. 1, xii. 39, a tower in or near the NE. corner of the city walls, not far from the gate of Benjamin.

to the king's wine-vats. Probably near the 'king's garden' and pool of Shiloaḥ (Neh. iii. 15), at the SE. corner of the city, not far from the former royal palace. The verse thus specifies two of the former boundaries of the city, one on the N., and one on the E., within which, after its elevation, it will still be inhabited as of old. Cf. Jer. xxxi. 38, where Jeremiah promises that Jerusalem shall be rebuilt *from the tower of Ḥănan'ēl unto the corner gate*, meaning thereby to indicate the line of its N. wall.

11. The inhabitants will not again have to go into exile, as had lately (*v.* 2) been their lot; nor will the 'ban' again fall upon it, as it had done in the past (Is. xliii. 28 [read the past tenses, as in RVm.]; and in the threat, Jer. xxv. 9). Cf. Rev. xxii. 3.

ban. Fig. for destruction. To 'ban' (the cognate verb is

12 Jerusalem shall dwell safely. And this shall be the plague
wherewith the LORD will smite all the peoples that have
warred against Jerusalem: their flesh shall consume away
while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall
consume away in their sockets, and their tongue shall
13 consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass
in that day, that a great [a] tumult from the LORD shall be
among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the
hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against
14 the hand of his neighbour. And Judah also shall fight
[b] against Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the nations

[a] Or, *discomfiture*

[b] Or, *at*

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usually in RV. rendered by 'devote,' or by 'utterly destroy,' with 'devote' in the margin) was to devote to Yahweh for destruction: it was especially put in force against heathen people or cities, after they had been conquered. See Nu. xxi. 2; Dt. ii. 34, vii. 2; Josh. vi. 17, 18, 21; 1 S. xv. 3, 8: and cf. 'Curse' in *DB.*

dwell (*v.* 10) **safely.** As Lev. xxvi. 5; Ez. xxviii. 26, xxxiv. 25, 28 *al.*

12–15. The prophet now comes back to describe the destruction of the nations who had been warring against Jerusalem (*vv.* 2–3).

12. An appalling plague falls upon them: they are smitten, as they stand, into mouldering corpses.

plague. I. e. πληγή, a severe *stroke* or *blow* (cognate with the verb rendered 'smite'), not necessarily (see 2 S. xviii. 7 'slaughter'), though it is so in the present case, a 'plague' in the modern sense of the word (cf. Nu. xvi. 48–50, xxv. 8, 9; 2 S. xxiv. 21).

consume away (each time). **Moulder** (Is. xxxiv. 4 RVm.), or **rot**; in Is. iii. 24, v. 24, the cognate subst. is rendered *rottenness.* In the Heb. the pronouns 'their,' 'they,' from 'their flesh' to 'their tongue,' are all singular, individualizing the description.

13, 14. A great panic will seize them, causing them in their bewilderment to slay one another; and their wealth will become the spoil of the Jews. Cf. Jud. vii. 22; 1 S. xiv. 20; 2 Chr. xx. 23; and esp. Ez. xxxviii. 21 (in the picture of the rout of the hosts of Gog after their assault upon the land of Israel).

discomfiture (RVm.). I. e. confusion, rout: cf. 1 S. xiv. 20; and the cognate verb in Jos. x. 10, Jud. iv. 15, 1 S. vii. 10 *al.*

14. And Judah also. In distinction from, if not (see the next note) in opposition to, Jerusalem: cf. xii. 2^{b}, 7.

against (or **in**) **Jerusalem.** I. e. either (We., Now., Smith,

round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver,
and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the 15
plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the
ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in those camps, as
this plague. And it shall come to pass, that every one 16
that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem
shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the

Marti), Judah also will be seized by the panic, and fight *against* Jerusalem (cf. xii. 2^b), though this is not a thought suggested by the context; or Judah, though once (xii. 2^b, 7) unfriendly to Jerusalem, will now fight *in* it against the common foe.

and the wealth, &c. The tables will be turned; and the lot of Jerusalem (*v.* 1^b) will now become that of its foes. Cf. Ez. xxxix. 9, 10 (the vast spoil taken from the hosts of Gog)[1].

15. The sequel to *v.* 12. A plague similar to that of *v.* 12 will fall also upon the invaders' beasts of burden and other animals.

and so. I. e. like the plague of *v.* 12, which is also referred to by 'this plague' at the end of the verse. The close connexion of *v.* 15 with *v.* 12, and esp. the words 'so' and 'this,' give some colour to the suggestion that *vv.* 13, 14 are not original here, but have been introduced by a later writer from the point of view of ch. xii ('*against* Jerusalem' being in this case the meaning in *v.* 14).

16–19. The effects of this judgement upon Israel's foes. Those who survive of the nations will become worshippers of Yahweh, and keep the feast of Booths every year at Jerusalem (*v.* 16). Drought, or some equivalent misfortune, will be the punishment of any nation which neglects this pilgrimage (*vv.* 17–19). With the general thought of the passage, cf. Is. lxvi. 18, 19, 20, 23 (effects of the judgement described in *vv.* 15–17 upon the nations).

16. which came against Jerusalem. See *vv.* 2, 3, 12.

the King. Absolutely, *the* Sovereign of the world. The feast—or, strictly (p. 140), the *pilgrimage*—of Booths (Lev. xxiii. 34; Dt. xvi. 13–16), also called the feast of Ingathering (Ex. xxiii. 16 = xxxiv. 22), was pre-eminently an occasion of thanksgiving for harvest and vintage (Dt. *l. c.*). It is mentioned, probably, partly as the most important of the three annual pilgrimages of the Jews (Ex. xxiii. 14, 15–17 = xxxiv. 18, 22, 23; Dt. xvi. 13–17),—it is sometimes spoken of absolutely as '*the*

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[1] The Hebrew scholar should notice in this verse the *late* idiom לָרֹב (more than thirty times in Chr., e.g. 1 Chr. xxii. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 14, 15; see the writer's *Introduction*, p. 502 f. (ed. 7, p. 535), No. 2).

17 LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And
it shall be, that whoso of *all* the families of the earth
goeth not up unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the
18 LORD of hosts, upon them there shall be no rain. And
if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, [a] neither
shall it be upon them; there shall be the plague, wherewith
the LORD will smite the nations that go not up to keep
19 the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the [b] punishment
of Egypt, and the [b] punishment of all the nations that go

[a] Or, *shall there not be upon them the plague &c.?* The text is probably corrupt. The Sept. and Syr. have, *upon them shall be the plague &c.*

[b] Or, *sin*

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pilgrimage' (1 K. viii. 2, 65; Ez. xlv. 25; Neh. viii. 14),—partly because it was the feast at which the nations could give direct expression to their own religious thankfulness for the fruits of the earth, and partly (Wellh.) because at the time when the prophecy was written the yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem was an important agency for keeping alive the connexion of the Diaspora with the capital, and so it would naturally be thought of as a means for promoting the same end in the case of the nations also.

17. there shall be no rain. The feast of Booths being an expression of thankfulness for the year's produce, the neglect of it is appropriately punished by the withholding of the rain upon which the crops depend (cf. Am. iv. 7). The failure of rain naturally implies other ills: not only scarcity of food, but disease, mortality among men and cattle, &c.

18. neither, &c. The rend. of RV. implies such an elliptical and strangely expressed text, and that of RVm. is so forced and unnatural, that we can hardly be wrong in reading with LXX, Syr. (see RVm.), **upon them shall be the plague wherewith,** &c. The prophet recollects that the punishment threatened in *v.* 17 would not affect Egypt (where rain is very rare (cf. Hdt. ii. 13 f., iii. 10), the soil being fertilized not by the rainfall, but by the annual rising of the Nile); but, he adds, its people will not escape: the same 'plague' of scarcity, famine, disease, &c. which is to affect other nations will affect them also, though it will be due, it is implied, not to the failure of rain, but to the failure of the annual rising of the Nile.

19. punishment. *Lit.* 'sin,' but regarded here as including its consequences; cf. Nu. xxxii. 23, and 'iniquity' in Gen. iv. 13, 2 K. vii. 9.

not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall 20
there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLY UNTO THE
LORD; and the pots in the LORD's house shall be like the
bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and 21
in Judah shall be holy unto the LORD of hosts: and all
they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe

20-21. The final and crowning trait in the picture: the holiness of Jerusalem. This is a frequent feature in the prophets' delineations of the ideal future: see e.g. Is. iv. 3; Jer. xxxi. 40 (cf. *v.* 38, cited above on *v.* 10); Is. lx. 21, lxii. 12; Joel iii. 17.

20. Even horses, which, as used principally for warlike purposes, were viewed with disfavour by the prophets, and threatened with extinction in Jerusalem (ix. 10; Is. ii. 7; Mic. v. 10), will now be withdrawn from secular uses, and consecrated to Yahweh.

bells. Bells upon the necks of animals are very common in the East.

Holy unto Yahweh. The same inscription which was on the turban of the High-Priest (Ex. xxviii. 36).

the pots. Such as were used either for removing ashes from the altar of burnt offering (Ex. xxvii. 3; 1 K. vii. 40 RVm., 45), or (see *v.* 21) for boiling sacrifices in. The **bowls,** or **basons,** were large vessels, used (see on ix. 15) for dashing the blood of the slain animals against the sides of the altar. The meaning therefore is, either that the altar pots, used only for mean purposes, will become as holy as the bowls used for the reception of the sacrificial blood; or (We., Now., Smith, Marti), as all the altar utensils would be holy alike (Ex. xl. 10; Lev. viii. 11), that on account of the crowd of pilgrims attending the feast of Booths (*vv.* 16-19), the boiling-pots will have to be 'like' the great altar-bowls in size, capacious enough to contain the sacrifices that would be required.

21. Not only this, however, but *every* pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to Yahweh, and so available for the use of the crowds offering sacrifice. The general thought of the holiness of Jerusalem is here developed with special reference to the annual pilgrimages (*v.* 16 ff.), and the sacrifices by which they would naturally be accompanied.

and all they that sacrifice, &c. The pilgrims, in preparing their sacrifices, will be able to use any of the pots in Judah and Jerusalem, and not merely those belonging to the Temple.

and seethe (i.e. **boil**) **therein.** For the boiling of sacrifices, see 1 S. ii. 13 (at Shiloh), Lev. vi. 28 (the sin offering), Ez. xlvi. 20, 24, 2 Chr. xxxv. 13.

therein: and in that day there shall be no more a [a] Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

[a] Or, *trafficker*

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a Canaanite. According to Keil and others, mentioned as a type of an unclean person (cf. Is. lii. 1). But more probably the marg. is right (see Zeph. i. 11): the meaning then being that as any vessel in the country could now be used for sacred purposes, traffickers—perhaps actually Canaanites—with boiling-vessels for sale or hire would no longer have occasion to haunt the Temple, and desecrate it by their presence (cf. Mt. xxi. 12).

Additional Note on Zech. xi. 12, 13.

It may be worth while to place here the quotations in St. Matthew side by side with the Heb. text and the LXX.

Mt. xxvi. 15: And they weighed him thirty pieces of silver (*ἀργύρια*).

Zech. xi. 12 LXX: And they weighed as my hire thirty pieces of silver (*ἀργυροῦς*).

Zech. xi. 13 Heb.: And Yahweh said unto me, Cast it to the potter [Pesh.: into the treasury], the noble value that I was valued at (and dismissed) from them. And I took the thirty (pieces of) silver, and cast it [*sic*] into Yahweh's house, to the potter [Pesh.: into the treasury].

Zech. xi. 13 LXX: And the Lord said unto me, Let them down (*κάθες αὐτοὺς*) into the furnace (*χωνευτήριον*[1]), and I will see[2] whether it is approved (*δόκιμον*)[3], as I [apparently B alone has 'it'] was approved for their sake (*ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν*). And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and threw them into the Lord's house, into the furnace.

Mt. xxvii. 9^b, 10: And they took[4] the thirty pieces of silver, the value of him that had been valued, whom they valued [= who was valued] on the part of (RVm.: see Meyer) the children of Israel, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me.

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[1] Reading for יוצר (or אוצר) some derivative, real or imagined (e. g. מוּצָק), of יָצַק *to pour out* or *cast*: cf. Ex. xxvi. 37 *al.* *χωνεύω* for יָצַק. *χωνευτήριον* (properly, a 'melting-pot') is also the rend. of Symm.

[2] אֶרְאֶה or אֵרֶא for אֶדֶר.

[3] הֲיָקָר for הַיְקָר,—'whether [it is] precious' being paraphrased by 'whether it is approved.'

[4] In the Greek, the form is the same as that of 'I took' in Zech.

MALACHI

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

MALACHI

INTRODUCTION

§ I. NAME OF THE PROPHET, AND CONTENTS OF HIS PROPHECY.

RESPECTING the person of Malachi nothing is known. The name does not occur elsewhere: and most recent scholars doubt whether it is really the personal name of the prophet. It is identical with the Heb. word for 'my messenger' in iii. 1. If it is a proper name, it can hardly mean 'my messenger,' but must be regarded as a shortened form for Malachiah [1], 'messenger of Yah' (though this name also does not actually occur). But the LXX and the Targum do not recognize it as a proper name. The LXX in i. 1 have 'by the hand of *his messenger*' (מלאכו for מלאכי); and the Targum has, 'by the hand of my angel, *whose name is called Ezra the scribe.*' The tradition identifying the author of the prophecy with Ezra is mentioned also by Jerome (who accepts it) and other writers. Still, had Ezra been the author of the prophecy, it is difficult to think that his authorship would have been thus concealed [2]. From the similarity of the title, in form, to Zech. ix. 1, xii. 1 it is probable that it is due to the compiler of the volume of the Twelve Prophets [3]; and this, taken in conjunction with the somewhat prominent recurrence of the same word in iii. 1, has led to the conjecture that the prophecy, when it came to the compiler's hands, had no author's name attached to it, and that he prefixed to it a title suggested by iii. 1, the 'messenger' there spoken of being either supposed by him to be the prophet himself, or understood by him to be a term descriptive of his office, and so capable of being applied to him symbolically (Ewald, Kuenen, Stade, Wellh., Nowack, Smith, &c.).

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[1] For the contraction, see Nöldeke, art. 'Names' in *EB.* § 52.

[2] The tradition arose doubtless out of the feeling that the spirit of Ezra breathed in the book.

[3] The combination 'the oracle of Yahweh's word,' as was remarked on p. 236, is peculiar, occurring only in these three

Contents of the Prophecy. The prophecy falls naturally into seven paragraphs or sections, the contents of which may be summarized as follows :—

(1) i. 2–5 (Exordium). To those who asked whether Yahweh still loved Israel, the prophet replies by pointing to the contrasted lots of Israel and Edom : in vain may Esau's descendants expect a restoration of their ruined country.

(2) i. 6—ii. 9. Israel, however, is unmindful of this love, and does not render to Yahweh the honour and reverence which are His due. Especially the priests are neglectful of their duties, allowing blemished and inferior animals to be presented upon the altar, and bringing thereby the service of Yahweh into contempt (i. 6–14). The priests are unworthy of their ancestry : unless they amend their ways, Yahweh will send His curse upon them, and they will be openly disgraced before all the people (ii. 1–9).

(3) ii. 10–16. A rebuke addressed to those who had divorced their own wives and contracted marriages with foreign women : such practices, the prophet declares, are inconsistent with the love and faithfulness which, as children of one Father, they all owe to one another, besides imperilling Israel's distinctive nationality.

(4) ii. 17—iii. 6. In reply to those who questioned God's justice, and complained that evil-doers enjoyed Yahweh's favour and prospered, Malachi announces the approach of

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passages. The compiler, having reached the end of Zech. i–viii, had still, we may suppose, three prophecies in his hands to incorporate, viz. those now known as 'Zech.' ix–xi, xii–xiv, and 'Malachi' (the first two of which were in any case anonymous) ; and he framed the titles of Zech. xii–xiv and Malachi on the model of the opening words—or, if the conjecture mentioned on p. 236 is correct, the title,—of Zech. ix–xi.

a day of judgement, when Yahweh will appear 'suddenly,' firstly to purify the unworthy priests, that they may offer pure and acceptable sacrifices, and secondly to purge the land of sinners in general.

(5) iii. 7–12. The neglect of the people in paying tithes and other dues has been visited by Yahweh with drought, locusts, and failure of crops: let these dues be conscientiously paid, and the visitations will cease, and the land again be abundantly blessed.

(6) iii. 13—iv. 3. A section among the people—no doubt, the murmurers addressed in ii. 17—iii. 6,—complain that 'it is vain to serve God'; for no distinction is made between the evil and the good. The day is coming, replies the prophet, 'burning as an oven,' when Yahweh will distinguish between them quite clearly; the workers of wickedness will be consumed, and the righteous will triumph over their fall.

(7) iv. 4–6. Conclusion. The prophecy concludes with an exhortation to obey the requirements of the Mosaic law, and with a promise of the advent of Elijah the prophet, to move, if possible, the people to repentance, and thereby to avert the threatened judgement.

§ 2. HISTORY OF THE TIMES, AND DATE OF MALACHI.

It is evident that the prophecy of Malachi belongs to the period after the Captivity, when Judah was a Persian province (notice in i. 8 'thy governor (Heb. *peḥāh*),' as Hag. i. 1, Neh. v. 14, xii. 16, &c.), when the Temple had been rebuilt (i. 10, iii. 1, 10), and public worship was again carried on in it. It will be a help, however, in the effort to determine its date more precisely, and also contribute to illustrate the condition of the people at the time when it was written, if we survey briefly what is known of the history of Judah during the years that began with the completion of the Second Temple.

The Second Temple was completed in 516 B.C., two years after the date of Zechariah's final prophecy (Zech. vii, viii). Between Ezra vi, in which its dedication is described (*vv.* 16–18), and Ezr. vii there is a gap of nearly sixty years (included in the words 'after these things,' vii. 1), during which the history of Judah is virtually a blank. All in fact that we know of this period is that at the beginning of Xerxes' reign (485–65) the Samaritans made unfriendly representations respecting the Jews at the Persian court (Ezr. iv. 6). In the seventh year of Artaxerxes (465–25), however (B.C. 458), Ezra, the priest and scribe, received permission from the Persian king to return from Babylon to Jerusalem, to inquire into the religious condition of the country, and to take with him as many of the Jews still in exile as chose to accompany him (Ezr. vii. 6–8, 14, &c.). Ezra started upon his mission with many marks of the royal favour. Offerings were sent by the king to the Temple: the treasurers of the satrapy to which Jerusalem belonged were instructed to assist him with funds: and the priests and Levites and other Temple officials were exempted from the payment of taxes. About 1,750 Jews availed themselves of the permission to return with Ezra. The incidents of the return are told in Ezr. viii. It was not many days after Ezra's arrival that his reforming spirit began to display itself. The princes of the people called his attention to the prevalence of intermarriage with the heathen people of the land, which was threatening to destroy the distinctive character of the nation: if we may judge from the horror displayed by him at the intelligence (Ezr. ix. 3 f.), Ezra had no idea of the extent to which the practice had spread. His own feeling on the matter quickly infected the people: a number of the better-minded members of the community came forward and offered him their support: three days afterwards a public assembly was held; a commission of elders was appointed to inquire into the facts; and such as had contracted foreign marriages—among whom are mentioned in particular many priests and Levites—were compelled to put away their wives (Ezr. x).

At this point the memoirs of Ezra abruptly end; and for thirteen years we again know but little directly about the internal affairs of Judah. It was in all probability, however, during this interval that the events recorded in Ezr. iv. 7–23 took place[1]. The Jews set about rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem; but the Samaritans made such strong representations at the Persian court of the mischief which might ensue, if the work were allowed to proceed, that they were obliged to desist. Forcible measures were indeed, we are told (Ezr. iv. 23), used against them; and the dismantled walls and burnt gates, described by Nehemiah in 445 (Neh. i. 3), seem, at least in part, to have been the result.

The Book of Nehemiah opens in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, B.C. 445. In this year Nehemiah, Artaxerxes' cup-bearer, hearing of the ruined state of the walls of Jerusalem, and the unhappy condition of the restored community, obtained permission to proceed to Jerusalem as governor, and rebuild the walls of the city. Nehemiah's own memoirs describe graphically how, upon his arrival at Jerusalem, he induced a number of the leading families to co-operate with him, and how, in spite of the efforts of Sanballat and others to arrest the progress of the work, the restoration of the walls was completed within the space of fifty-two days (Neh. ii–iv, vi). The walls finished, Nehemiah at once applied himself to relieve the distress which pressed heavily upon a considerable section of the community. Many of the poorer Jews had been compelled by the bad seasons to mortgage their lands in order to get food, or to pay the Persian tribute; and some, not having the means to pay their creditors, had been obliged to sell their children as slaves. Nehemiah summoned an assembly; and induced the wealthy money-lenders to restore the lands of their poorer brethren, and to reduce or forgo the interest which they had been exacting (Neh. v). Shortly afterwards (Neh. viii), on the first and second days of the seventh month (Tishri), B.C. 444, Ezra (who now suddenly reappears), at the request of the people, read the 'book of the law' in a public assembly, Nehemiah and a number of Levites standing by him and assisting. The reading deeply impressed those who heard it; and it was continued during the seven days (the fifteenth to the twenty-first of Tishri) of the feast of Booths. On the twenty-fourth of the same month a solemn fast was held; and the people, separating themselves from all foreigners, assembled again for a great national act of humiliation and confession (Neh. ix). This ended, they pledged themselves by a covenant to obey the law, undertaking in particular, (*a*) to avoid marriages with foreigners, (*b*) to do no trade on the Sabbath or other holy day, (*c*) to observe the sabbatical year and its remission of debt, (*d*) to pay a poll-tax of ⅓ shekel for the maintenance of the Temple services, (*e*) to pay tithes and firstfruits to the Levites (Neh. x). Soon afterwards (Neh. xii. 27–43) the restored walls were dedicated with universal rejoicings.

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[1] On the misplacement of Ezr. iv. 6, 7–23, see p. 146 *n*.

Nehemiah's furlough, it seems, was now at an end, and he had to return to the Persian court. Twelve years later, in 432, he visited Jerusalem again (Neh. xiii. 4–31). In spite of the solemn promises made by the people in 444, he found that in the interval the old abuses and irregularities had revived. A grandson of the high-priest, Eliashib, had married a daughter of Sanballat, the Horonite (xiii. 28; see ii. 10); the Ammonite, Tobiah (ii. 10, vi. 18), was also connected by marriage with Eliashib; and a chamber in the Temple court, in which tithes and other dues had formerly been stored, had been appropriated to his use. The Levites had not received the dues to which they were entitled; they had consequently retired to their fields in the country, and the Temple services were not properly kept up. Nehemiah rectified these abuses, and also took measures to secure the observance of the Sabbath, protested strongly against the marriages with foreign women—in particular, with women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab—which were still in vogue, restored the Temple services, and made provision for the payment of their dues to the Levites.

A comparison of the terms in which Malachi speaks with the condition of Judah as disclosed in this survey leaves no doubt that his prophecy, speaking generally, belongs to the age of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Temple has been restored: but years enough have passed to disappoint the fervid hopes held out in 520 by Haggai and Zechariah of the position which Judah would assume, as soon as its restoration was completed. The priesthood has become lax and degenerate; there have been numerous marriages with foreign women; and the laity have shown great remissness in the payment of tithes and other sacred dues. These abuses, especially the second and the third, are just those which, as we have seen, Ezra, and particularly Nehemiah, found prevalent in Judah, and set themselves energetically to correct. Is it, however, possible to fix Malachi's date more precisely? Malachi certainly attacked the same abuses that Ezra and Nehemiah did: but did he, for instance, prepare the way for Ezra's reform of 458, or for the covenant to which Ezra and Nehemiah jointly bound the people in 444, or for the reforms instituted by Nehemiah at his second visit in 432? That he wrote *while* Nehemiah was governor of Jerusalem is improbable, on account of i. 8, which implies that gifts were offered to the 'governor,' whereas Nehemiah tells us that he refused to accept any (Neh. v. 15, 18). From the close similarity between the abuses attacked by Malachi and those which Nehemiah found at his visit in 432 (neglect of the Temple services, the non-payment of tithes, and mixed marriages), it has been argued that he prophesied shortly before this date. On the other hand, though Ezra mentions only the mixed marriages, the other abuses may well have prevailed before; the terms of the covenant entered into in 444 (Neh. x. 34 ff.) imply that there had already been remissness in the payment of sacred dues: and other considerations point in the direction of an earlier date. The code accepted by the people in 444 clearly included the Priestly law of the Pentateuch (see Neh. viii. 13–18, x. 32–39): Malachi, however, uses terms suggested by Deuteronomy (see on ii. 2, 4, iii. 5, 10, iv. 4), and does not betray that familiarity with the Priestly Code which might be expected in one who wrote after 444. It is true, in commanding (iii. 10) the whole tithe to be paid into the Temple, Malachi agrees with the Priestly Code against Deuteronomy (see the note on iii. 8): but it is pointed out that, even supposing that the payment of tithe to the sanctuary was first *codified* in 444, it does not follow that the practice first *began* then: the legislation of P constantly attaches itself to pre-existent usage: so that this passage of Malachi is not decisive for a date later than 444. Whether Malachi prophesied also before the arrival of Ezra in 458 it seems impossible to determine. When Ezra arrived in Jerusalem he found that the question of foreign marriages had already been vexing the heads of the community (Ezr. ix. 1); so Malachi may have been one of those who had been rousing the attention of the people to the subject. On the other hand, he may also have prophesied shortly before the arrival of Nehemiah in 445. Certainly Ezra's words made a deep impression upon the people, and many mixed marriages were repudiated in consequence (Ezr. ix–x); but we do not know how far the reform reached, or how long it was before the evil began to revive, as it certainly had revived, when Nehemiah visited Jerusalem in 432 (Neh. xiii. 23–28). There may thus have been sufficient occasion for Malachi's words upon the subject even after 458. The *data*, it must be evident, point in different directions; and materials for a confident conclusion do not exist. Recent authorities, laying stress chiefly on the Deuteronomic expressions of Malachi, are in favour of a date shortly before 458[1]. We must be content to know that the prophet was a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah; and to feel sure that he supported those reformers, and insisted independently upon the importance of their work.

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[1] W. R. Smith, *O.T. in the Jewish Church*, pp. 425 f., 427 *n.*, 446 (perhaps before 458, certainly before 444: so G. A. Smith,

§ 3. SCOPE AND CHARACTER OF MALACHI'S PROPHECY.

The moral and spiritual temper of Judah when Malachi came forward to prophesy may be gathered partly from particulars mentioned in the preceding survey, partly from allusions contained in the prophecy itself. The feeling prevalent in Judah at the time was one of depression and discontent. The expectations which earlier prophets had aroused had not been realized. The return from Babylon had not been followed by the ideal glories promised by the Second Isaiah; the completion of the Temple had not, as Haggai and Zechariah had promised, brought in the Messianic age; Jerusalem, instead of its population overflowing on all sides (Zech. ii. 4), was thinly inhabited (Neh. vii. 4, xi. 1), and, till 445, largely a ruin (Neh. i. 3, ii. 3, 17); bad harvests (Mal. iii. 11), troubles from neighbours (Ezr. iv. 7–23; cf. Neh. iv. 2 ff.), and general poverty (Neh. v) increased the disheartenment. A spirit of carelessness and indifference prevailed widely among the people. Many, for example,—and here the priests were the chief offenders,—forgetful of the honour and reverence which were His due, treated Yahweh's altar with contempt, offering upon it cheap or blemished sacrifices (i. 6–8, 13, 14): in other respects, also, the priests had declined from the high ideal of their office; they performed its duties

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pp. 337 f.); Wellh., Nowack, Marti (before 458): A. B. Davidson also (*The Exile and the Restoration*, pp. 88 ff.) places Malachi before Ezra and Nehemiah. Kuenen (*Einl.* § 84. 8–10) and Kirkpatrick (pp. 497 f.) prefer *c.* 432. Kuenen observes that, even though Malachi wrote after the Priestly Code was accepted, he may still have used the older and more familiar Deuteronomic expressions.

perfunctorily; they were open to bribery; they permitted to one what they refused to another; uprightness and impartiality were not, as they should have been, the ruling principles of their life (ii. 6, 7, 8, 9^b). The people generally were remiss in the payment of tithes and other sacred dues (iii. 8). Divorce also was abnormally prevalent; a man, when the 'wife of his youth' no longer pleased him, repudiated her, heedless of the suffering inevitably entailed by such heartless and unnatural behaviour (ii. 10, 13-16). At the same time marriages with foreign women—perhaps, in particular, with women belonging to the Samaritans and other neighbours of the Jews, who had not been disturbed from their homes, and were wealthier and better off than the colonists who had returned from Babylon—were now in fashion, and threatened to obliterate the distinctive character of the nation (ii. 11, 12; also Ezr. ix-xi, Neh. xiii. 23-29). There were besides 'sorcerers, adulterers, false swearers,' as well as those of whom the prophets in the past had so often complained, men belonging to the well-to-do classes, who nevertheless looked down coldly upon all beneath them, and scrupled not to withhold the wages of the hired servant, and to oppress in different ways 'the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow' (iii. 5)[1]. In consequence, no doubt, of the troubles and social wrongs which they saw about them, there arose a party who, though they observed the forms of religion (iii. 14), were deficient in spirituality, and impatient because their religious observances brought them no advantage; who gave way consequently to sceptical thoughts, who doubted, for instance, whether Yahweh had any real 'love' for Israel (i. 2), who argued that it was vain to serve Him, for the righteous had no advantage over the wicked, and who asked, 'Where is the God of judgement?' (ii. 17, iii. 14 f.). In contrast to these three classes of the indifferent, the 'proud' (iii. 15), and the doubters, there was the seemingly small circle of loyal and pious servants of Yahweh, who clung together, and did their best to reassure one another with thoughts of trust and hope (iii. 16). Malachi, in Yahweh's name, comes forward emphatically as one of these (iii. 17 f.); and his book is essentially an argument addressed to the various classes just mentioned. He points out the inconsistencies and unseemliness involved in the irreverence towards God, and in the practice of divorce; he recalls priests and laity alike to the ideals which they have forgotten; and he announces the speedy advent of a great and signal Day of Judgement, which will separate the good from the wicked, and satisfy the doubters,—a day when the degenerate priesthood will be purified, so that Judah's offerings will again, as of old, be acceptable to Yahweh, when the perjurers, the oppressors, and all others who work wickedness will be consumed, and left without 'root or branch' (iv. 1), but when the little group of His own pious worshippers will be owned by Him as the heirs of Israel's ideal privilege, even as His 'peculiar treasure,' and when their righteousness, shining forth as the sun, will bring them healing from their woes. Before, however, this Day of Judgement breaks, Elijah the prophet will be sent to heal dissensions in the nation (iv. 6), and to do what he can to prepare men for the advent of the Judge (iii. 1).

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[1] On the cleavage of parties in Malachi's age, and the rise, by the side of the stricter, national party, of another party 'lax, ready to compromise principles, cosmopolitan, and with no feeling of race, and therefore unsympathetic towards their poorer fellows (Mal. iii. 5),'—the forerunners of the antinational Hellenizing party in the Maccabaean age,—cf. Davidson, *The Exile and the Restoration*, p. 89.

Though the word itself is not used, Malachi's theodicy is just Isaiah's doctrine of the preservation of a faithful 'remnant' (see on Zeph. iii. 11), applied and adapted to the circumstances of his own day. Malachi's descriptions of the ideal future are brief. Israel's sacrifices will be acceptable when the priesthood has been purified (iii. 3^b, 4); prosperity, and the envious admiration of the nations, are promised if tithe and *terûmâh* are duly paid (iii. 10^b, 12); the pious worshippers of Yahweh will come forth from their hiding-places into light and happiness when their righteousness has been vindicated and the wicked have been exterminated (iii. 2, 3). The judgement, it has been observed, which Malachi looks forward to is confined to Israel; it is a sifting which removes the ungodly members of the theocracy: but the heathen world in general—with the one exception of Edom (i. 3, 4), which explains itself, and in spite of the prophet's strong condemnation of marriages with foreigners—is viewed by him on its better side (i. 11), and Israel is contrasted unfavourably with it (i. 12). Haggai and Zechariah, on the other hand, had both proclaimed the approaching fall of the powers of the world. The difference may be due partly to the fact that Haggai and Zechariah wrote when men still remembered the heavy yoke of Babylon, whereas Malachi lived under the benigner rule of Persia: but this will hardly be the entire explanation. Malachi has graver fault to find with his own people than those two prophets had; and the judgement which he announces is determined accordingly. And so we may notice that while Haggai and Zechariah promise that Yahweh will come to dwell in His Temple, as His people's protector (Zech. ii. 10, 12, viii. 3), Malachi declares that He will come to His Temple as His people's Judge (iii. 1 ff., iv. 1).

Like the other prophets, Malachi aims at recalling his people to moral and religious earnestness. But the means adopted by him are not those followed generally by the other prophets. Malachi insists upon the importance of maintaining the purity of the public worship of God, and the distinctive character of the nation. His book is remarkable among the writings of the prophets on account of the interest which it evinces in ritual observances, and the grave light in which it views ritual laxity.

The explanation is to be found in the circumstances of the time. The course of events since the restoration had made the Temple, with its high-priest and its sacrificial system, a centre for the community much more than it had been before: but this very fact had a providential significance in view of the future. It was essential for Israel's preservation as the people of God that the ceremonial obligations laid upon it should be strictly observed, and that it should hold itself aloof socially from its heathen neighbours. Malachi judged the times as the reformers Ezra and Nehemiah judged them. But he is no formalist; his book breathes the genuine prophetic spirit; he prophesies, as G. A. Smith has happily put it, 'within' the law, but not 'under' the law. Naturally men's neglect or observance of ritual rules was a measure of their regard for God: but what Malachi demands is not the observance of these rules in themselves, but the spirit of worship, of reverence, and of faithfulness, which finds expression in them: he enforces the claims of the law, but only in so far as its forms are the expression of that spirit: moral offences are strongly reprobated by him (iii. 5); and from the thought of the brotherhood of all Israelites, as children of one spiritual Father, he deduces the social duties which they owe to one another, and the wrongfulness of the selfish system of divorce prevalent in his day. The book of Malachi is an original and attractive one; and we may be thankful that it has been preserved in the volume of the Twelve. Not only does it present us with the picture of a man of deep earnestness and incisive moral force contending boldly and independently against the abuses of his time, but it is, from a historical point of view, of great interest and value; for it sheds much welcome light upon the social and religious condition of Judah at a time about which our other sources leave us in many respects imperfectly informed.

The style of Malachi is more prosaic than that of the prophets generally, though his sentences often fall into the rhythmical parallelism which is such a constant feature in the more elevated oratory of the prophets. He does not possess the eloquence or the imaginative power of some of the older prophets: but his words are always forcible and direct: and the similes and imagery which he uses are effective and to the point; e.g. i. 6, and especially iii. 2, 3, 17^{b}, iv. 1, 2^{a} (the 'sun of righteousness'), 2^{b}, 3. He adopts also a novel literary form: first he states briefly the truth which he desires to enforce, then follows the objection which it is supposed to provoke, finally there comes the prophet's reply, reasserting and substantiating his original proposition (i. 2 f., 6, 7, ii. 13 f., 17, iii. 7, 8, 13). Thus in place of the rhetorical development of a subject, usual with the earlier prophets, there appears in Malachi a dialectic treatment by means of question and answer. It has been supposed that we have here the first traces of that method of exposition, which, in the schools that arose about this time, became ultimately the prevalent one.

MALACHI

THE [a]burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by 1
[b]Malachi.

I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein 2
hast thou loved us? [c]Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith

[a] Or, *oracle*   [b] Or, *my messenger*

[c] Or, *Is not Esau . . . ? yet I have loved &c.*

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i. 1. *Title.* **The oracle,** &c. Cf. Zech. ix. 1, xii. 1, and see p. 285 *n.* On 'Malachi,' also, see p. 285.

2–5. The love of Yahweh towards Israel, which was questioned by some of Malachi's contemporaries, is manifest in the contrasted lots of Israel and Edom: in vain may Esau's descendants expect a restoration of their ruined country. The mode of developing a subject by question and answer is characteristic of Malachi; see p. 298.

2^{a}. I have loved you. Yahweh's *love* of His people is emphasized especially in Hosea (iii. 1, ix. 15, xi. 1, 4, xiv. 4), and Deuteronomy (iv. 37, vii. 7, 8, 13, x. 15, xxiii. 5): see also Jer. xxxi. 3; 1 K. x. 9^{b}; Is. xliii. 4, lxiii. 9 (cf. the writer's note on Dt. vii. 8).

Yet ye say, &c. In order to introduce the proof that Yahweh loved Israel, the prophet represents the people as raising an objection to the statement, which he then proceeds to meet.

2^{b}, 3. The reference is to Jacob and Esau, not as individuals, but as representatives of the nations descended from them; in fact, it is the nations whom the prophet has really in his mind (cf. Am. i. 11, and Obad. 10, where the nation, Edom, is called Israel's 'brother,' and Obad. 6, where 'Esau' stands for Edom, just as 'Jacob' often in poetry stands for Israel). This sense is better brought out by RVm., **Is not** *Esau Jacob's brother* . . . ? *yet* **I have loved** *Jacob, but Esau* **I have hated,** than by RV. (= AV.) *Was not* . . . ? (There is no verb for either 'Was' or 'Is' in the Heb.). Israel and Edom were two neighbouring nations, sprung, according to tradition, from twin-brethren according to the flesh: standing thus in the same relation to Yahweh, it might have been expected that they would have been treated by

3 the LORD: yet I loved Jacob; but Esau I hated, and made his mountains a desolation, and *gave* his heritage

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Him similarly. But in point of fact, while Yahweh loved Jacob, he 'hated,' or had no care for 'Esau'; and the prophet refers to some recent desolation of the territory of Edom in proof of his statement. The desolation referred to is probably the invasion of Edom by Nabataean Arabs, which obliged the Edomites to evacuate their own territory and find new settlements in the south of Judah (which was ever afterwards called 'Idumaea'; so e.g. in the N.T., as Mark iii. 8). The exact date of this invasion is not known; apart from the evidence supplied by the present passage (*c.* 460 B.C.), we only know that it must have been before B.C. 312, in which year Antigonus (p. 231), having driven Ptolemy Lagi out of Coele-Syria, sent an expedition against the Nabataeans, who were already settled in Petra (Diod. xix. 94–100; Schürer, i. 612 [Eng. Tr. i. 2. 349]). Nothing is known of a desolation of Edom by the Chaldaeans at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586, which is supposed by some commentators to be referred to; besides, the nature of the allusion requires some occurrence more nearly within the prophet's own time.

The ground of Yahweh's different treatment of the two nations is to be found naturally in their different dispositions and religious aptitudes. We know indeed few details of the religion of Edom (see Nöldeke's art. 'EDOM' in *EB.*); but so far as we can gather, the Edomites were a worldly, unspiritual people, as they were certainly in character fierce, undisciplined, and turbulent (cf. Jos. *BJ.* iv. 4, 1; v. 1). A border-nation to the Hebrews, allied closely by race, and speaking probably (for no Edomite inscriptions have hitherto been found) almost the same language, the Edomites were in genius and character,—and, as history proved, ultimately also in destiny,—utterly diverse from the Hebrews. Israel was the nation which had the higher and truer religious instincts, and was thus the better fitted to be Yahweh's 'servant' (Is. xli. 8, xliv. 1, &c.), and to be 'loved' by Him. It was thus 'a true instinct which led Israel to regard their "brother" as representative of that heathendom against which they had to realize their destiny in the world as God's own nation' (Smith, p. 350). The antagonism between the two nations often found expression not only in war, but also in mutual recriminations and jealousies: cf. Am. i. 11; Obad. 10–14, Ezek. xxxv. 5, 10, 12, 13, and Ps. cxxxvii. 7 (allusions to Edom's unfriendliness at the time when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldaeans); Jer. xlix. 7–22; Lam. iv. 21, 22; Is. xxxiv, lxiii. 1-6. Malachi's appeal to the disaster which had lately befallen Edom, as proof of Yahweh's

to the jackals of the wilderness. [a] Whereas Edom saith, 4
We are [b] beaten down, but we will return and build the
waste places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall
build, but I will throw down: and men shall call them
The border of wickedness, and The people against whom
the LORD hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall 5
see, and ye shall say, The LORD [c] be magnified [d] beyond
the border of Israel.

A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: 6

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[a] Or, *Though Edom say*

[b] Or, as otherwise read, *impoverished*

[c] Or, *is great*

[d] Or, *over*

---

regard for Israel, was thus one eminently adapted to evoke an immediate response in the hearts of his fellow countrymen.

Mal. i. 2^b, 3^a is quoted by St. Paul in Rom. ix. 13, also with reference to the contrasted religious experiences of the two *nations*: see Sanday-Headlam, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 245 ff.; and Gore, *The Argument of Romans ix–xi* in *Studia Biblica*, iii. 37 ff.

3. jackals. Often mentioned as haunting deserted sites; cf. Is. xiii. 22, xxxiv. 13, and Jeremiah's expression 'a dwelling-place of jackals,' ix. 11, x. 22, xlix. 33, li. 37. Packs of jackals still do the same in Syria; for instance, about the ruins of Baalbek (Tristram, *NHB.* 111).

4, 5. Even though Edom rebuild its ruined homes, Yahweh will destroy them; and men will recognize that He is supreme even beyond Israel's own land.

4. Whereas. Rather, **If,** or (RVm.) **Though.**

beaten down. This sense is established by the Syr. *rāsh*: cf. Jer. v. 17. RVm. (=AV.) may be disregarded.

The border (i. e. *territory*) **of wickedness.** The lasting desolation of Edom will be evidence in men's eyes of the wickedness of its inhabitants, and of God's anger as resting upon it. For the expression, 'men shall call' (i. e. give a name, as witness to a fact), cf. Is. lx. 14, lxi. 6, lxii. 12.

5. and ye: the pronoun is emphatic.

Yahweh is great (RVm.) **beyond the border of Israel.** An ascription of praise to Yahweh, whose power is thus shown to be not limited to the territory of His own people.

i. 6—ii. 9. The prophet turns to address the priests, who do not pay Yahweh the honour and reverence which are His due: they allow blemished and inferior animals to be presented upon

if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be
a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts
unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say,
7 Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted
bread upon mine altar. And ye say, Wherein have we
polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is
8 contemptible. And when ye offer the blind for sacrifice,

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the altar; and the service of Yahweh is in consequence brought into contempt (i. 6–14). The priests are unworthy of their ancestry: unless they amend their ways Yahweh will send a curse upon them, and make them contemptible before all the people (ii. 1–9).

6. The prophet begins by stating two principles to which every one will naturally assent: the application to the priests appears only afterwards, and comes as a surprise.

A son, &c. Cf. the Fifth Commandment.

and a servant his master. We should probably, with LXX, insert **feareth** after 'a servant': the second clause will then exactly correspond to the fourth, as the first clause does to the third.

O priests, that despise my name. The application, made forcibly, and with a startling epithet attached. Yahweh's name is 'despised' by the indifference and irreverence with which His services were maintained.

And ye say, &c. The priests are supposed to be surprised at the imputation, and to ask for an explanation of it.

7. polluted: viz., as the third clause in the verse shows, by the disrespect with which they treated the services of the altar.

bread: i. e. sacrificial flesh,—an archaic expression, retained from the time when the sacrifice was actually regarded as the 'bread' or food of the Deity. Cf. Lev. iii. 11, 16, and (in the 'Law of Holiness') xxi. 6, 8, 17, 21, 22, xxii. 25; Ez. xliv. 7.

polluted thee. Perhaps, with LXX, Marti, we should read 'polluted *it*,' i. e. the 'bread.'

In that ye say, &c.: viz., not in so many words, but virtually, by treating Yahweh's table with irreverence.

The table: i. e. the altar, as Ez. xli. 22, xliv. 16. The reference is not to the 'table' of the shew-bread.

8. They are content to sacrifice to Yahweh, against the Law (Lev. xxii. 20, 21^b–24, in the 'Law of Holiness'; Dt. xvii. 1), blemished or imperfect animals, such as their own Persian governor would not think of accepting as a present. In **blind**

it is no evil: and when ye offer the lame and sick, it is no evil! Present it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee? or will he accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts. And now, I pray you, intreat the favour 9 of God, that he may be gracious unto us: this hath been [a] by your means: will he [b] accept any of your persons? saith the LORD of hosts. Oh that there were one among 10 you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle

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[a] Heb. *from your hand.* [b] Or, *accept any because of you*

and **lame** there may be reminiscences of Dt. xv. 21 (of the firstlings).

it is no evil! i.e. You say, There is no harm in it, it does not signify.

thy governor: the *peḥah*, or Persian governor, of Judah; see on Hag. i. 1.

be pleased with thee: perhaps **with it** (LXX [codd. AQ]; We., Now., Marti) would be better; cf. *vv.* 10, 13 'accept' (the offering), ii. 13[b] ('with *acceptance*'). The Hebrew for 'be pleased with' is the same as that rendered 'accept,' *vv.* 10, 13, and in the passive 'be accepted,' Lev. i. 4, vii. 18, xix. 7, xxii. 23, 25, 27 (cf. cognate words, *vv.* 19, 20, 21, 29; Lev. i. 3, xix. 5). 'To be pleased' or 'favourable' is the proper meaning of the word.

accept thy person: *lit.* 'lift up thy face,'—a common Heb. figure for 'receive favourably,' meaning properly, lift up the face of a suppliant: see e.g. 1 S. xxv. 35. The opposite expression is 'turn back the face,' 1 K. ii. 16.

9. intreat the favour, &c. The close of this verse and *v.* 10 seem to show that the words are meant, not as a serious exhortation to repentance (Hitz., We., Now.), but ironically (Keil, Orelli, Marti): since your governor will not accept such offerings, entreat God's favour, and see whether He will!

this: the presenting of such unworthy offerings (*vv.* 7, 8[a]). For **from your hand** (marg.), cf. 'at (Heb. from) your hand,' *vv.* 10, 13, ii. 13; and Is. i. 12.

any of your persons. The marg. is less probable.

10. Better that the Temple were shut up altogether than that such sacrifices, presented in such a spirit, should be offered on it! The wish is of course intended ironically.

the doors. Not the doors of the Temple itself (the only altar in which was the altar of incense, in the Holy Place), but the doors of the gates (1 Chr. xxii. 3; also, of a city-gate, Jud. xvi. 3 *al.*) leading into the inner court, in which the altar of burnt-offering stood.

fire on mine altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering
11 at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto

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in vain: i. e. to no purpose, because viz. the sacrifices offered upon the altar were not accepted by Yahweh.

accept. Properly (*v.* 8), *be favourable to*: the word used with reference to sacrifices in Lev. i. 4, vii. 18, &c. (cited on *v.* 8), Ps. li. 16^b.

an offering. Heb. *minḥāh*, properly a *complimentary present*, or a present made to secure or retain goodwill (Gen. xxxii. 13, 20, xliii. 11; Jud. iii. 15, 17), or as a mark of allegiance (1 S. x. 27), offered, as something expected, by a political subject (2 S. viii. 2, 6; 2 K. xvii. 3, 4 *al.*); then of a tribute offered to God, both generally (including animals), Gen. iv. 3, 4, 5, 1 S. ii. 17, 29, iii. 14, xxvi. 19, and specifically (as always in the Priestly Code of the Pentateuch) of the 'meal-' or cereal-offering (e. g. Lev. ii; and repeatedly in Nu. xxviii–xxix). As the word, when used of a sacrifice, has this double sense, it is not always certain which is intended; hence there are many passages in which, where RV. has 'offering' or 'oblation' in the text, it has 'Or, *meal-offering*' on the margin (e. g. Am. v. 25; Jer. xiv. 12; Ps. xx. 3: see further *DB.*, s.v. 'OFFERING,' **4**). On the whole, however, in non-technical passages, or where there is nothing to suggest the limitation to 'meal-offerings,' the presumption is that it is used in the general sense of 'offering' or 'oblation': so, for instance, Is. i. 13, xix. 21, and here, as also in the sequel, *vv.* 11, 13 [where clearly *animals* are included], ii. 12, 13, iii. 3, 4.

11, 12. The reason for *v.* 10^b. Yahweh has no pleasure in Israel's offerings (*v.* 10^b), for, while He is honoured among the Gentiles (*v.* 11), Israel dishonours Him (*v.* 12). The actual reason for *v.* 10^b is given in *v.* 12, *v.* 11 being introduced merely to bring out the contrast between the reverence shown by the Gentiles and the irreverence of Israel. Malachi must have recognized a spirit of monotheism in heathen religions, and allowed that offerings rendered to a God recognized as one were rendered to Yahweh. He may have generalized from the doctrines of the Persian religion, which were certainly purer and more spiritual than those of heathenism generally. The passage is a tribute to the truer and better side of heathen religion, a recognition of the fact that 'in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him' (Acts x. 35). 'The book of Malachi even recognizes in the religious earnestness of the Gentiles a form of devotion which Yahweh is willing to accept' (Ottley, *Religion of Israel*, p. 161).

the going down of the same my name [a] is great among the Gentiles; and in every place [b] incense is offered unto

[a] Or, *shall be* [b] Or, *incense and a pure oblation are offered*

AV. (whence RVm. 'shall be') interpreted the verse of the future; and so most of the older expositors understood it to refer to the future acceptance of Israel's religion by the nations. But though of course this thought would be in harmony with what is taught elsewhere by the prophets (see on Zech. ii. 11), it can hardly be expressed here. There being no verb expressed in the Heb., גדול שמי בגוים can only be naturally rendered 'My name is great among the Gentiles'; inasmuch further as *vv.* 11, 12 plainly give a reason ('For') for the disapproval expressed in *v.* 10^{b}, they must describe a condition of things existing in the prophet's own present; the contrast between what is done at the time by the Jews in *v.* 12 with what is done elsewhere in *v.* 11 points to the same conclusion. Notice also the exactly similar words in *v.* 14, 'And my name is feared among the Gentiles,' where no one has ever thought of rendering by a future. Hence it is extremely difficult to think that *v.* 11 can refer to any time except the prophet's own present.

On the other hand, it is urged that the expression, 'my *name*,' presupposes the Divine revelation, and cannot refer to an unconscious worship. Hence Ewald, Kirkpatrick (p. 505), and others, while agreeing that the passage relates to the present, suppose the reference to be to the Jews of the Dispersion, who, scattered through the world, rendered by their offerings of prayer and praise a more acceptable service to Yahweh than the careless priests in the Temple at Jerusalem, and that thus Yahweh's name was magnified among the heathen more than in His own Temple and in the city of His choice. The contrast would then be between the faithful Jews of the Dispersion and the lax and indifferent Jews of the capital. It is some objection to this interpretation that it requires 'incense' and 'offering' to be understood in a spiritual sense, of prayer (Ps. cxli. 2; Rev. v. 8, viii. 3), and praise (Ps. l. 14; Heb. xiii. 15; 1 Pet. ii. 5), or self-dedication (Rom. xii. 1), which is not very natural where Jews are the offerers, and where there is nothing, as in the passages quoted, to suggest that the terms are used in such a sense. Perhaps also the argument founded on 'my name' lays rather too much stress upon this particular expression.

incense is offered, &c. It is difficult to see how RVm. differs from RV. (= AV.), except in the order of words ('oblation' is substituted for 'offering' on account no doubt of the proximity of 'offering'). The Heb. is, however, somewhat peculiar:

my name, and a pure offering: for my name [a] is great
12 among the Gentiles, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye
profane it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is
polluted, and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is con-

[a] Or, *shall be*

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the subst. rendered 'incense' does not occur elsewhere, and Ewald and Keil, taking it as a ptcp., construe differently[1], but obtain the same general sense. We., Now., Marti, however, think that 'it is offered' is a gloss on 'it is incensed (*or* burnt),' and omitting a ו, render, 'and a pure offering is burnt unto my name,'—the word rendered 'burnt' being the one regularly used of consuming the sacrifices on the altar (Lev. i. 9, &c.), and meaning properly *made into sweet smoke* (*κνίσῃ*).

a pure offering. Heb. *minḥāh*, to be understood in the same sense as in *v.* 10. 'Pure,' as unsullied by irreverence, like the sacrifices offered in the Temple at Jerusalem (*vv.* 7, 12), or by an ungodly spirit in the offerers (2 Tim. ii. 22).

From Justin (*c. Tryph.* § 41, cf. § 117) and Irenaeus (iv. 17. 5) onwards, it has often been supposed that this passage of Malachi is prophetic of the Eucharistic offering, to which, it is also pointed out, *minḥāh*, in the sense of a meal-offering, would be entirely appropriate. As we have seen, however, the context seems plainly to show that the reference is to offerings made in Malachi's own time; and secondly, when *minḥāh* has been used just before (*v.* 10), and is used again just after (*v.* 13), in a continuous argument, in its wider sense of sacrifices in general (including animal sacrifices), it is not consistent with sound exegesis to understand it differently in this one verse.

12, 13. In contrast to the honour which the heathen thus render to Yahweh, the priests of Israel *dis*honour Him, treating His worship with disrespect and contempt.

12. in that ye say, &c. As in *v.* 7, not literally, but by irreverence towards Yahweh's altar and offerings.

and the fruit thereof, &c. If correct, 'fruit' (ניב, a rare word, Is. lvii. 19) will be a figure for 'offerings.' But the figure is a strange one: the Heb. construction is forced; and most probably ניבו is simply an incorrect anticipation of the following נבזה (W. R. Smith, Now., &c.). Render then, **and his food is contemptible.** 'Meat' in AV. is here used in its now obsolete sense noticed on Hab. i. 16.

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[1] 'It (impers.) is incensed, it is offered, and that (with) a pure offering.'

temptible. Ye say also, Behold, what a weariness is it! 13
and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye
have brought that which was taken by violence, and the
lame, and the sick; thus ye bring the offering: should I
accept this of your hand? saith the LORD. But cursed 14
be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and
voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a blemished thing:

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13. what a weariness is it! What a trouble the service of the sanctuary is!

and ye have, &c. Present tenses would be better: **and ye puff . . . and ye bring.**

puff at it. I. e. contemn it. For the figure cf. Ps. x. 5, xii. 5 (where the Heb. word is almost the same); and the note on Hag. i. 9. 'It' will refer to the 'altar,' *v.* 12. The passage is, however, one of the eighteen 'corrections of the scribes' (see on Hab. i. 12), and 'me' (which is found in some MSS.) is said to have been the original reading for 'it'; and perhaps Now., Marti, and others are right in adopting this. 'Snuff' is an archaism for 'sniff'; but 'puff,' or 'blow,' is the idea which the Heb. word expresses.

and ye bring that which hath been taken by violence (robbed). Treating therefore Yahweh with contempt, as though He cared so little what was offered to Him that He would even accept this. There is, however, an awkwardness in the Heb., which makes it possible that we should read (We., Now., *al.*) 'and ye bring *the blind*'; cf. *v.* 8.

thus ye bring the offering. The clause is much improved if, with We., we make a very slight change (אתו מנחה for את המנחה), and read, **and ye bring it as an offering.**

of your hand. 'Of' is here an archaism for 'from': cf. Ex. xxxvi. 3; John iv. 22 (AV.); 2 Cor. v. 1 (AV.), &c. See 'Of' in *DB.*

14. The prophet closes the paragraph with an indignant rebuke, addressed to the laity, who also, like the priests, failed in treating Yahweh with becoming reverence. A vow was made; and the vow was redeemed by offering a sickly or inferior animal. Naturally, the priests also were to blame for allowing such sacrifices to be presented.

the deceiver. Or, **the fraudulent man.**

and voweth. I. e. **and voweth it** (LXX, Now., Smith, &c.). The 'vow' was a promise to offer something to Yahweh in case some prayer or wish were granted (Gen. xxviii. 20–22; Jud. xi. 31; Ps. lxvi. 13–14). According to the 'Law of Holiness' (the older legislation embedded in Lev. xvii–xxvi), an animal offered for I am a great king, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is terrible among the Gentiles.

2 And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.
2 If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, then will I send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye
3 do not lay it to heart. Behold, I will rebuke [a] the seed

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[a] According to some ancient versions, *your arm*.

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as a burnt-offering in payment of a vow had to be a male (Lev. xxii. 18-20), in the case of one offered similarly as a peace-offering there was no such restriction (*ib. v.* 21): in either case, however, the animal had to be without blemish or imperfection (*vv.* 19, 20, 21^b, 22-24). Here, a male, the more valuable animal, was promised, but when the time for paying the vow came, an inferior or blemished animal was substituted for it.

a blemished thing. Heb. *a corrupt thing*,—cognate with the word rendered 'corruption' in Lev. xxii. 25.

for I am a great king. And not therefore to be treated with such disrespect.

and terrible, &c. Or, **feared** (*v.* 6), **reverenced among the Gentiles**; and how much more, therefore, to be reverenced among My own people!

ii. 1-9. In thus acting the priests have shown themselves unworthy of their ancestry: unless they alter their ways, and treat Him with the respect that is His due, Yahweh will send His curse upon them; and they will be openly disgraced in the sight of all the people.

And now, unto you (emph.) pertaineth **this commandment, O priests.** The 'commandment,' or charge, is apparently the commandment to reform, implicit in *vv.* 2, 3: cf. *v.* 4^a.

2. to give glory (or **honour,**—as i. 6, and in the Fifth Commandment) **unto my name.** I. e. to render it the reverence and respect which are its due.

I will send upon you the curse. As Dt. xxviii. 20, which is probably alluded to.

your blessings. As Dt. xxviii. 2,—here more particularly of the privileges and advantages bestowed by Yahweh upon the priesthood.

yea, I have cursed them already. The curse has already begun.

3. The humiliation and disgrace, which will fall upon them.

for your sake, and will spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your [a] sacrifices; and ye shall be taken away [b] with it. And ye shall know that I have sent this command- 4

[a] Or, *feasts* [b] Or, *unto*

I will rebuke your seed[1]. I. e. prevent your seed from springing up or coming to maturity, make your field unfruitful. But as the priests did not practise agriculture, such a threat would not have any special significance for them. Hence nearly all moderns, including even Keil, changing merely the vowel-points, read, with LXX, Aq., Vulg., as RVm. **rebuke your arm**, incapacitate you for performing your duties in the sanctuary. But it is quite possible that we should make a further correction, and read (with We., Now., Marti) גרע for גער : **behold, I will hew off your arm,**—a forcible figure for depriving them entirely of their power, their position, and their authority. Cf. especially 1 S. ii. 31, where the same figure (render 'hew' for 'cut') is used to express the humiliation about to come upon Eli's house.

and will spread offal upon your faces. A still greater insult and indignity. The 'offal' meant is that which was removed from the animals offered in sacrifice, and either thrown away, or (in the case of the sin-offering) burnt: Ex. xxix. 14; Lev. iv. 11, xvi. 27 (where the Heb. word is the same).

sacrifices. Better, **pilgrimages** (Ex. xxiii. 14–17: see p. 140 *n.*): the word scarcely, either here or in Ex. xxiii. 18^b^, actually *means* the 'sacrifices' offered at them.

with it. This is possible (Jos. xiii. 22, Lam. iii. 41, Heb.), though RVm. **unto it** is the more obvious rendering. The priests, who had dishonoured Yahweh's offerings, themselves now bespattered with the offal of the sacrifices, will be taken off ignominiously to the place where it is thrown away as refuse.

4. When this disgrace falls upon them, they will **know** (i. e. realize) that Yahweh had sent this charge (*v.* 1) unto them, in order that His ancient covenant with the tribe of Levi might stand fast. 'Be,' it seems, must here have the force of *continue* or *be maintained.* For the 'covenant' with Levi, i. e. the conditions of holiness, separation to Yahweh, and faithfulness in the discharge of their duties, under which the tribe of Levi possessed the priesthood, cf. Dt. xxxiii. 9 (in the 'Blessing' attributed to Moses), Jer. xxxiii. 21.

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[1] Without 'for your sake': the ל in לכם is the ל of reference (*lit.* 'rebuke the seed for you'), often used idiomatically in such phrases: see e.g. ii. 12, iii. 11 (second and third clauses), Lev. xxvi. 5 (*lit.* 'the threshing shall reach for you'), 26 ('when I break for you'), 1 K. xiv. 10 (*lit.* 'cut off for Jeroboam'), *al.* (*Lex.* 512^b).

ment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi,
5 saith the LORD of hosts. My covenant was with him of
life and peace; and I gave them to him that he might
fear, and he feared me, and stood in awe of my name.
6 The law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness

Levi. I. e. the *tribe* of Levi, the priestly tribe.

The expressions 'Levi,' here and *v.* 8, and 'sons of Levi' (iii. 3), are noticeable. In the Pentateuch the term 'Levite' or 'sons of Levi' is used in two senses,—reflecting, as can hardly be doubted, two different stages in the history of the priesthood. In Deuteronomy it is applied to *all* members of the tribe without distinction; and every 'Levite,' i. e. every member of the tribe, possesses *de jure* priestly rights, and may exercise them, if he comes to reside at the central sanctuary (Dt. xviii. 6 f.; see further the writer's *Commentary on Deut.* pp. 213 ff., 219 f.; or W.R. Smith, *OTJC.*^{2} pp. 358 ff., 383 f.). In P the priesthood is rigidly limited to the descendants of Aaron; and the term 'Levite' is applied to inferior members of the tribe, who are assigned various subordinate duties in connexion with the sanctuary (Nu. iii–iv), but are strictly forbidden to intrude upon the office of priest (Nu. iv. 20, xvi. 7^b–11, 40). Thus in Deuteronomy the distinctive title of the priests is 'the priests the Levites' (or 'the sons of Levi'), i.e. the Levitical priests (xvii. 9, 18, xviii. 1, xxi. 5, xxiv. 8, xxvii. 9, xxxi. 9): in P it is 'the sons of Aaron' (Lev. i. 5, and often). Malachi thus follows, here, *v.* 8 and iii. 3, the Deuteronomic phraseology.

5. The conditions of the covenant. The Heb. is expressed obscurely. According to the Massoretic interpunction, it reads, 'My covenant was with him, life and peace: and I gave them to him (as) fear, and he feared me': but this yields no satisfactory sense: RV. 'that he might fear' is also too free. It is better to render: 'My covenant was with him: life and peace, and I gave them (= which I gave) unto him, [and] fear and he feared me,' &c.: the verse then states the conditions of the covenant, on the one side life and peace (i. e., in a broad sense, welfare and prosperity), promised by Yahweh to Levi; on the other side fear, or reverence, which in the past, according to Malachi's representation, the priests had duly rendered Him. For 'life' see Dt. xxx. 15; for 'peace' cf. the 'covenant of peace' of Ez. xxxiv. 25, xxxvii. 26, Is. liv. 10, in Nu. xxv. 12 also (P) given to Phinehas.

6. How this fear of God displayed itself in the faithful discharge of priestly duties.

The law of truth, &c. Rather, **The direction** (or **teaching**) **of truth was in his mouth.** 'Tôrāh' was *oral direction* given was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and uprightness, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they 7 should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But ye are turned aside out of the 8 way; ye have caused many to stumble in the law; ye have

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by the priests to the laity on matters of moral and ceremonial duty (see on Hab. i. 4, Hag. ii. 11): this 'direction,' Malachi says, was formerly given correctly and faithfully by the priests. Observe, in accordance with the proper oral character of 'tôrāh,' how elsewhere also, even in some cases in a non-technical sense, it is referred to as being in the 'mouth' (*v.* 7, Job xxii. 22, Ps. cxix. 72), or 'on the tongue' (Prov. xxxi. 26).

unrighteousness. I. e., here, 'direction' given with such laxity as to dishonour Yahweh (cf. on Zeph. iii. 4), or perverted by bribery (Mic. iii. 11; cf. also Jer. viii. 8).

he walked with me (Gen. v. 22) **in peace and uprightness:** i. e. in a state of contentment, not disturbed by jealousies, or unsatisfied ambitions, and of uprightness in the discharge of the duties of his office.

turn back many from iniquity: viz. by teaching them what they ought to do and avoid.

7. The ideal of a priest.

For the lips of a priest keep knowledge,—the knowledge viz. of the law (Jer. viii. 8), and in particular of its ceremonial observances.

and men seek direction (*v.* 6) **at his mouth, because he is Yahweh's messenger:** it is Yahweh's *tôrāh* which he administers. 'Messenger' is otherwise used of the priest only in Eccl. v. 6: cf. Hag. i. 13 (of the prophet). Compare the eulogy of the priestly tribe in Dt. xxxiii. 8–11, especially *vv.* 9, 10: 'They keep thy saying, and observe thy covenant: they teach (*lit.* 'direct') Jacob thy judgements, and Israel thy "direction."'

8. The reality contrasted with the ideal.

But ye (emph.) **have turned aside out of the way** (Ex. xxxii. 8, Jud. ii. 17),—the way described in *vv.* 6, 7, in which you ought to have walked.

ye have made many to stumble by direction (not 'in the law'). 'Unrighteousness' (*v.* 6) was on your lips, and you have caused many to err by giving them false 'direction': the consequence is, you have **corrupted,** i. e. ruined, destroyed, the covenant with Levi: the 'life and peace' on the one hand, and the 'fear' on the other (*v.* 6), are all at an end. Cf. Neh. xiii.

corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

9 Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have had respect of persons in the law.

10 Have we not all one father? hath not one God created

29, where the priests who had married foreign wives are described as having 'defiled the priesthood, and the *covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites.*'

9. The retribution.

have I also. The 'also' (גם) of 'correspondence' (Ps. lii. 5; Hos. iv. 6: *Lex.* p. 169^{b}): I *also*, on my part, will assert myself, and visit you with condign retribution. 'Have made' is here equivalent to 'will assuredly make,'—the action, though its accomplishment is still future, being so fully resolved upon that it is spoken of as already done: so Gen. xv. 18, Jud. xv. 3 Heb., Is. xliii. 14 *al.*

base: i.e. *low, abased,* in position, not in character, as often in Old English: cf. Ez. xvii. 14, xxix. 14; 2 Cor. x. 1 AV.

according as ye do not keep my ways, but respect persons (i.e. show partiality) **in** (giving) **direction.** The priests, it seems, were open to bribery (Mic. iii. 11 'her priests direct for hire'); and, it may be supposed, permitted to one what they refused to another, or exacted from some lower fees, or less costly sacrifices than they exacted from others: legal decisions also, such as could easily be vitiated by unjust interest or influence, appear to have been included in the *tôrāh* (Dt. xvii. 8–12; Ez. xliv. 24).

respect persons. The Heb. expression is the same as in i. 8; but it is used here in a bad sense, of favouring unjustly, as Ps. lxxxii. 2, Dt. x. 17. However, the omission of a letter yields an attractive emendation, *nor respect me,* which forms a good parallel to the preceding clause.

10–16. Malachi here turns to rebuke his contemporaries for a great social wrong, to which they were addicted at the time, viz. the divorce of their native wives (*vv.* 10, 13–16), for the sake, apparently (*vv.* 10 *end*, 11–12), at least in some cases, of contracting marriages with foreign women (cf. Ezr. ix–x; Neh. xiii. 23–29), a fashion which the prophet also censures at the same time. The practice of divorce he declares to be an offence against the love and faithfulness which as children of one Father they all owe to one another, an unnatural cruelty towards those who have been long bound to them by the ties of affection, and a challenge to the Divine judgement.

10. Yahweh is Israel's father (Dt. xxxii. 18; Is. lxiii. 16): we are all, therefore, brothers one of another: ought we not then

us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his
brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers? Judah 11
hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed
in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the
[a] holiness of the LORD which he loveth, and hath married
the daughter of a strange god. The LORD will cut off to 12

[a] Or, *sanctuary*

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to treat one another with brotherly regard, and not be faithless to the 'covenant,' by which (cf. Ex. xix. 5 f.) Yahweh separated us from the heathen, and made us a people peculiar to Himself?

deal treacherously. Or, **faithlessly.** The word is used also elsewhere of faithlessness to the marriage bond, *vv.* 14, 15, 16, Ex. xxi. 8, Jer. iii. 20^a.

profaning the covenant of our fathers. Viz. by marrying foreign wives, and thereby, in heedless disregard of the covenant by which Israel was separated from the heathen, imperilling its distinctive nationality (cf. the prohibition of such marriages, Ex. xxxiv. 16, Dt. vii. 3 f.).

11. Judah. The entire people is spoken of as implicated in the wrong. The words 'in Israel and' should doubtless be omitted; for 'Israel' is here out of place: a scribe probably wrote inadvertently 'in Israel' as a natural parallel to 'Judah,' then discovering his error he wrote 'in Jerusalem' as well, and the two remained in the text together.

hath dealt faithlessly. Here the expression is used not of faithlessness to the marriage-tie, but of faithlessness to Yahweh in discarding Him, at least constructively (viz. by marrying foreign women), for other gods: cf. Jer. iii. 7, 8, 20^b, v. 11.

an abomination is wrought: on account of the heathen practices and worships likely to be involved: cf. Dt. xiii. 14, xvii. 4 (the same phrase); Ezr. ix. 14.

Yahweh's holiness (or **holy thing**): i. e. Israel itself, as holy to Yahweh. Cf. Jer. ii. 3; also Ex. xix. 6, Dt. vii. 6, xiv. 2, &c. Or (marg.), **Yahweh's sanctuary** (1 K. viii. 10, 2 Chr. xxix. 5 Heb.), which is also profaned by the people's sins (Ez. v. 11, Lev. xx. 3, cf. xxvi. 2).

which he loveth. The addition accentuates the enormity of the offence.

the daughter of a foreign god. I. e. a foreign woman, belonging to another religion. The expression suggests pointedly the motive of the rebuke. For the figure cf. Dt. xxxii. 19, where the Israelites are called the sons and daughters of Yahweh, and Nu. xxi. 29 (the Moabites, sons and daughters of Chemosh). 'Strange' (EVV.), from the Lat. *extraneus*, is used here in the

the man that doeth this him that waketh and him that answereth, out of the tents of Jacob, and him that offereth

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now obsolete sense, which was formerly very common, of *foreign*: cf. the expressions 'strange women,' 'strange wives,' 1 K. xi. 1, Ezr. x. 2, 10, &c., Neh. xiii. 26, 27; 'strange gods,' Gen. xxxv. 2, 4 AV. (RV. 'alien'), Dt. xxxii. 12, Ps. lxxxi. 9^{b} *al.*; 'a strange land,' Ps. cxxxvii. 4. So the Homilies (cited by Aldis Wright) speak of 'a certain *strange* philosopher,' meaning, not an eccentric one, but a foreign one. But, as now understood, 'strange' so little suggests what is intended that it is a pity that 'foreign' has not been regularly substituted for it in RV.[1]

12. May the man who does this be left with none in any way to stand by or assist him!

May Yahweh cut off . . .! The Heb. word, as pointed, has an optative force.

him that waketh and him that answereth. If correct, this will be (in the Heb.) an alliterative proverbial expression (like 'him that is shut up, and him that is left at large in Israel,' 1 K. xxi. 21), meaning every one (i. e., here, every one belonging to him, every member of his family, Is. xiv. 22), and generally supposed, after Gesenius, to be derived from the challenge and reply given by sentries or watchmen as they went their rounds in the night. Ges. quotes a rather similar expression, used by an Arabic writer, 'There was not in the city a caller or answerer,' i. e. any one alive. Hitz. and Keil, however, render *him that is awake and answereth* (both words referring to the same person), i. e. any one alive, objecting to Ges.'s explanation that that would require 'him that *calleth* and him that answereth.' We., Now. and Smith, read, after LXX (ἕως), עֵד for ער, '*witness* and answerer' (viz. in a court of law: see Job xiii. 22): may he be

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[1] 'Stranger' also is often used similarly in the now obsolete sense of 'foreigner,' as Lev. xxii. 25 AV. (RV. 'foreigner'), 1 K. viii. 41, Neh. ix. 2, xiii. 30, Ez. xliv. 7, 9 AV. (RV. 'aliens'), Ps. cxliv. 7, 11. In fact 'stranger' is used in EVV. in three distinct senses, corresponding to three distinct Heb. words: (1) = *outsider* (Heb. *zār*), as belonging to another family, Dt. xxv. 5, or nation, Is. i. 7 and often; of a non-Levite, Nu. xviii. 4, a non-priest, Nu. xvi. 40; (2) = *foreigner* (Heb. *nokri*, and cognates), as in Lev. xxii. 25, &c., just cited; (3) = *resident alien* (Heb. *gêr*, 'sojourner'), see on Zech. vii. 10. And 'strange' occurs similarly in senses corresponding to the first two of these heads: thus for (1) see Dt. xxxii. 16, Ps. xliv. 20, lxxxi. 9^{a} (= strange to the theocracy); Lev. x. 1 (= strange to the law); and for (2) the passages cited above in the text.

an offering unto the LORD of hosts. And this [a] again ye 13
do: ye cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with
weeping, and with sighing, insomuch that he regardeth
not the offering any more, neither receiveth it with good
will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the 14
LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy
youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, though
she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

[a] Or, *a second time*

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deprived of all civil rights, and be as an outcast, with no one to defend him in a court of law!

and him that offereth, &c. May he further be deprived of all religious rights, and have no one even to offer a sacrifice on his behalf!

an offering. Heb. *minḥāh,* as i. 10 (see the note). So *v.* 13.

13. The prophet, after the digression of *vv.* 11, 12, reverts to the subject of divorce, with which the paragraph began (*v.* 10).

again: not the usual word; *lit.* 'as a second thing.'

ye cover, &c. RV. means, Ye cover Yahweh's altar with the tears of the divorced wives, who complain there to Yahweh of their wrongs, so that the gifts offered upon it are no more acceptable in His sight. But this interpretation of either 'ye do' or 'ye cover' is not very natural; and We., Now., Smith, Marti may be right in rendering, 'Ye cover the altar with tears, *because* (see Is. l. 2 Heb.) he regardeth not,' &c., supposing some calamity (cf. iii. 11) to have overtaken the nation, which the people regarded as a sign that Yahweh was displeased with them, and would not accept their offerings; they accordingly pressed round the altar, and implored there, even with tears, the return of His favour.

with good will. Or, *with acceptance.* The Heb. word (רצן) is the one rendered in Lev. i. 3, xix. 5, and elsewhere, *that he* (*ye*) *may be accepted* (*lit.* 'for his (your) acceptance'). Cf. on i. 8, 10.

14. The people are supposed to ask why Yahweh does not accept their offerings: the prophet replies, Because of their unfaithfulness to the marriage-tie.

hath been witness: at the time of the marriage, when Yahweh was a witness (cf. Gen. xxxi. 50) and surety of the agreement.

the wife of thy youth (Is. liv. 6): once beloved, but now that she is grown older, in spite even of the years of companionship, and the solemn marriage-contract, cast off.

the wife of thy covenant: the marriage-contract; cf. Pr. ii.

15 [a] And did he not make one, although he had the residue of the spirit? And wherefore one? He sought a godly

[a] Or, *And not one hath done so who had a residue of the spirit. Or what? is there one that seeketh a godly seed?*

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17. Or, perhaps (Now., Marti), the wife belonging to the covenant between Israel and its God, in which thou sharest, as opposed to the 'daughter of a foreign god,' *v.* 11.

15^a. A difficult and certainly corrupt passage. Four views of it may be noticed: (1) RV. (substantially = AV.) means: Did not he (God) make but one (Adam), although He had the residue of the spirit (of life: Gen. vi. 17), (and could therefore have made as many as He pleased). Why then did He make but one? Because He sought a godly seed (which could only be secured by the union of a single man with a single woman). But this interpretation is very forced.

(2) RVm. means: Not one hath ever done this (viz. faithlessly divorced his wife), who had a vestige (cf. on Zeph. i. 4) of the spirit (of God, Ps. cxliii. 10,—though there is no article here in the Heb.). Or is there any one seeking godly children (and so withheld by this from divorcing his wife)?

(3) Hitzig and Keil render: 'And not one hath done so, who had a vestige of reason ('spirit,' as Job xxxii. 8, but here of the moral sense). And what (did) the one (do)? He was seeking a seed of God.' 'And what did the one do?' is supposed to be an objection raised by the Jews: But what, they ask, did 'the' (well-known) 'one,' Abraham, do, when he sent away Hagar? The prophet replies, He was (not gratifying himself, as you are, but) seeking the promised seed. But 'the one' is a strange expression by which to denote Abraham (Is. li. 2, Ez. xxxiii. 24 are different); nor was Hagar Abraham's 'wife.'

(4) We., emending slightly the text, renders (so Now.): 'Hath not (הלא for ולא) One (God: cf. *v.* 10) made and left over (וישאר for ושאר), i. e. preserved (1 S. xiv. 36, xxv. 22), to us (לנו for לו), the spirit (of life: Gen. vi. 17; Is. xlii. 5)? And what doth the One seek? a seed of God (i. e. children, the gift of God, Ps. cxxvii. 3).' The passage then gives two reasons against divorce: (1) we are all members of God's family, and should treat one another accordingly: (2) when our wives give us children, we have obtained as much as Yahweh designs, or we are entitled to expect; we are not entitled to discard our wives afterwards, because they grow old. This interpretation yields an excellent sense, and is attractive, though to 'leave over' (viz. from destruction: 1 S. *ll.cc.*) is not a natural expression to use in the present connexion for to 'preserve.'

seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none
deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For [a] I 16
hate putting away, saith the LORD, the God of Israel, and
him that covereth his garment with violence, saith the
LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye
deal not treacherously.

Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye 17

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[a] Heb. *he hateth.*

15^b. to your spirit: the Heb. can mean only '*in* your spirit,' i.e. in your mind. Reading ל for ב we could render *for your spirit* (i.e. for your life),—a variation of the more common 'take heed to yourselves' (lit. *for your soul*), Dt. iv. 15 *al.* But the same error is hardly likely to have happened twice (*v.* 16 *end*).

and let, &c. The Heb. is, 'And against the wife of thy youth let him not (*or* let none) deal faithlessly.' This is obviously wrong. We must either, with Pesh., AV., RV., read 'his' for 'thy' (נעוריו for נעוריך), or, with several Heb. MSS., LXX, Targ., Vulg., read 'deal not' for 'let none deal' (תבגד for יבגד). The latter is more pointed, and preferable.

16. Divorce is hateful to Yahweh. Dt. xxiv. 1–4 regulates divorce, but does not prohibit it. An ambiguous expression in Dt. xxiv. 1 (RV. 'some unseemly thing'; see the writer's note *ad loc.*) may have contributed to the laxity which afterwards prevailed (cf. Mt. xix. 3 'for every cause'). Malachi's words are an anticipation of the higher teaching of Mt. v. 32, xix. 6, 8.

I hate. The Heb., as RVm. states, is 'he hateth'; but the first person is required by the context, so that either אשנא or שנאתי must be read for שנא. 'Putting away,' as Dt. xxiv. 1.

that covereth his garment with violence: apparently a fig. expression for, covereth himself with violence (viz. in ill-treating his wife). In the *Ḳor'ān* ii. 183 it is said, 'You are permitted to approach your wives in the night of the fast. They are your garment, and you are theirs'; and some commentators accordingly take 'garment' here as a figure for 'wife.' But it is doubtful whether 'his garment,' standing alone, without any explanation (as in the Ḳor'ān passage), could have this sense.

to your spirit. Read **in**, as before; and then 'deal not *faithlessly*.'

ii. 17—iii. 6. There was a class among Malachi's contemporaries who were not irreligious (cf. iii. 14^b), and are not to be identified with the godless of iii. 15, 18, but who were deficient in spirituality, and were tempted consequently by the troubles and social anomalies which they saw about them to question God's say, Wherein have we wearied him? In that ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or where is the God of judgement?

3 Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; [a] and the [b] messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold, he cometh,

[a] Or, *even* [b] Or, *angel*

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justice, and to doubt whether He would ever interpose, to distinguish between the evil and the good. To such the prophet replies that the day is at hand when Yahweh will suddenly appear in His Temple to separate between the righteous and the wicked, and to purify His ungodly nation, priests and laity alike, in the furnace of judgement.

17. wearied. A strong word: properly *made to toil*, fig. for, been a burden and trouble to me; cf. Is. xliii. 23^b, 24^b (where the parallel clause has *made to serve*). Not the word used in Is. vii. 13.

yet ye say. The objection stated, as before, i. 6, 7, &c.

or where? &c. There is no God of judgement; or else He would have interposed long ago.

iii. 1. The judgement which has been called in question will come: Yahweh Himself will suddenly appear in His temple, and execute it.

Behold, I am sending: the participle, as often in the prophets, especially after 'behold,' of the future, conceived and pictured as imminent. The judgement described by the prophet is pictured by him as falling upon the present generation; cf. on iv. 1, 5; Nah. ii. 2; Hag. ii. 21; Zech. iii. 8. For other examples (in the Heb.), see Hab. i. 6; Zeph. iii. 19; Zech. ii. 8, 9 [Heb. 13, 14], iii. 9, viii. 7, xi. 6, 16, xii. 2, xiv. 1; Mal. ii. 3, iii. 1 *end*.

prepare: properly, **clear**, remove obstacles from. The expression is very probably suggested by Is. xl. 3; cf. lxii. 10.

my messenger: an ideal figure, who will clear the way before Yahweh,—fig. for, prepare men to receive Him, like the courier who precedes an earthly monarch to announce his approach. Cf. iv. 5.

whom ye seek: alluding to the wish to see Him appear, implied in the words 'or where,' &c., at the end of ii. 17.

suddenly. A graphic and significant addition, at a moment when you do not expect it. Cf. in the N. T. Mt. xxiv. 42, 44.

the messenger of the covenant: a synonym of 'the Lord' (אדון),—notice 'whom ye desire,' parallel to 'whom ye seek,'—i. e. Yahweh, not in Himself, however, but in a representative form (just as 'Yahweh's angel' in the historical books is Yahweh

saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of 2
his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?
for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and 3
he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall

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in a representative form), who may embody and represent the claims of the covenant upon Israel. The 'and' connects not different ideas, but different expressions of the same idea (explained in RVm. by 'even'), as e.g. Is. v. 16, xliv. 1, 2^b, xlix. 14.

The first half of the verse is cited in Mt. xi. 10 = Luke vii. 27 by our Lord, and in Mk. i. 2 by the Evangelist (cf. Luke i. 76 in the *Benedictus*), and applied to John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who prepared men for Him by preaching repentance and proclaiming the advent of the kingdom of God (Mt. iii. 1–12). Only we must remember, as in some other cases (Zech. ix. 9, for instance), that, though one detail in the prophecy was thus fulfilled, the entire picture, as drawn by the prophet, was not fulfilled; for Christ, when He came to the Temple, initiated no purifying judgement upon the priesthood, nor was His advent followed by any such moral change as made Judah's offerings more acceptable to God than they had been before. Malachi, moreover, clearly pictures a judgement which is to take place shortly, so as to satisfy the doubters of his own day. The prophets project *ideals*, which are the pictorial embodiments of great moral and spiritual truths, but which are often not fulfilled in the manner or at the time indicated by the terms which the prophets use. Cf. F. H. Woods, *The Hope of Israel* (1896), chaps. iv, x.

2. The 'day' of Yahweh's appearing will be one of judgement and purification, before which nothing but what is noblest and purest can endure. Cf. Am. v. 18 f.; and on Zeph. i. 7.

a refiner's fire: fierce and hot, oxidizing and carrying away the base elements mixed with the silver (cf. Zech. xiii. 9).

fullers' soap: cleansing garments thoroughly from all impurities. By 'soap' is meant no doubt 'lye' (Job ix. 30 RVm.), i. e. water mixed with the burnt ashes of certain plants containing alkali, which was used formerly for washing purposes. LXX *πόα* (as Jer. ii. 22), with reference, as Jerome explains, to such plants.

3. sit: a graphic, pictorial touch: cf. 'stand' in Mic. v. 4.

as a refiner and purifier of silver. The passage is well illustrated by J. Napier, *The Ancient Workers and Artificers in Metal*, 1856, p. 24, cited in Smith, *DB*. svv. 'Mines' and 'Lead.' In the 'cupelling' process, by which silver is separated from such impurities as iron, copper, or tin (Ez. xxii. 20), the alloy is mixed with lead, placed in a 'cupel,' or small crucible made of bone ash, and then raised to a full red heat in a furnace. When the alloy is melted, air is blown upon it: this causes the lead and other

purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and
silver; and they shall offer unto the LORD offerings in
4 righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and
Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of
5 old, and as in ancient years. And I will come near to
you to judgement; and I will be a swift witness against
the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false

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baser metals to oxidize; the oxides form at first a kind of orange-red scum on the surface of the molten alloy; but soon, 'as the heat is increased, the colour of the fused metals becomes brighter. . . . At this stage the refiner watches the operation, either standing or sitting, with the greatest earnestness, until the orange colour disappears, and the metal has the appearance of a highly polished mirror, reflecting every object around it; even the refiner, as he looks upon it, may see himself as in a looking-glass; and thus he can form a very correct idea respecting the purity of the metal.'

the sons of Levi. The judgement will begin upon the corrupt priesthood.

purge. The word (זקק), meaning properly, it seems, to *strain*, which is used of 'purifying' or 'refining' silver in Ps. xii. 7, 1 Chr. xxix. 4, and gold in Job xxviii. 1, 1 Chr. xxviii. 18.

and they shall be unto Yahweh offerers of offerings in righteousness. The Hebrew expresses a continuing condition. For 'offerings,' here and *v.* 4 (Heb. *minḥāh*), see on i. 10.

in righteousness: i. e. in holiness of life (Luke i. 75), and as the expression of a righteous spirit. Cf. 'sacrifices of righteousness,' Dt. xxxiii. 19, Ps. iv. 5, li. 19, in the same sense.

4. Then Judah's offerings will be again acceptable to Yahweh (contrast i. 10, 13 f., ii. 13), as in the golden days of old. The past is idealized, as in ii. 5, 6 (cf. Hos. ii. 15; Jer. ii. 2): 'days of old' is an indefinite expression, which may refer either to the Mosaic age (Is. lxiii. 9, 11), or to the days of David and Solomon (Am. ix. 11); cf. for the general thought Is. i. 26.

5. The judgement will not stop at the corrupt priesthood; it will pass on and embrace sinners among the people generally.

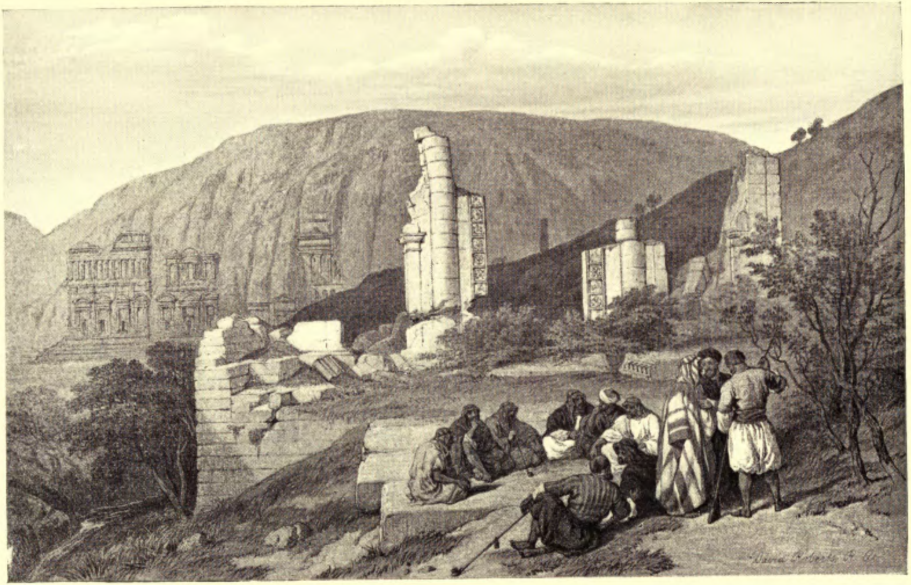
to judgement: the answer to the challenge of ii. 17 *end.*

a swift witness: a witness prompt not only in giving evidence, but also, being at the same time judge, in executing the sentence.

sorcerers: Ex. xxii. 18 (fem.); Dt. xviii. 10. In proof of sorcery prevailing also after the Exile Keil quotes Jos. *Ant.* xx. 8. 6, *BJ.* ii. 13. 5, 6 (under Felix); Acts viii. 9, xiii. 6.

adulterers: Ex. xx. 14, Lev. xx. 10; cf. ch. ii. 14.

false swearers: Lev. xix. 12; cf. Zech. v. 4.



Drawing by David Roberts, R.A.

RUINED CITY IN EDOM (PETRA)

swearers; and against those that oppress the hireling in
his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn
aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith
the Lord of hosts. For I the Lord change not; there- 6
fore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside 7
from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return
unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of
hosts. But ye say, Wherein shall we return? Will a man 8
rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we
robbed thee? In tithes and [a] offerings. Ye are cursed 9

---

[a] Heb. *heave offerings.*

that oppress (or **defraud**) **the hireling:** Dt. xxiv. 14. For the rend. 'defraud,' which is the kind of oppression meant, see 1 S. xii. 3, 4; Lev. xix. 13 (AV.); Hos. xii. 7 (RVm.); and AVm. here.

the widow and the fatherless: Ex. xxii. 22; Dt. xxiv. 17.

the stranger: i. e. the resident foreigner (see on Zech. vii. 10): Ex. xxii. 21 f.; Dt. xxiv. 17 ('the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,' as types of the needy and unprotected, also often besides in Dt., as x. 18, xiv. 29, xvi. 11, 14, xxiv. 19, 20, 21). For 'turn aside,' &c., cf. Is. x. 1, xxix. 21; Am. v. 12.

and fear not me: the root of all these sins.

6. For, &c. The verse must give the reason for *vv.* 2-5 in general: Yahweh does not destroy, but only purifies Israel, *because*, in His purposes towards His people, He is unchangeable, and will not utterly consume them (Jer. xxx. 11).

7-12. Malachi now charges the people with neglecting to pay tithes and other dues. Let these be paid; and the drought and other visitations from which the people are suffering will cease, and the land will be abundantly blessed.

7. From the days, &c. The burden of the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel: see e. g. Jer. vii. 25 f., xxv. 3-7; Ez. xx. 5-26.

Return unto me, &c. As Zech. i. 3.

But ye say, &c. Affecting not to know in what respect there is any occasion to 'return.'

8. Will a man (emph.) **rob God, that ye rob me?** You are doing what it is incredible that any man would do.

tithes. The payment of tithe is prescribed in both Dt. (xii. 17 f., xiv. 22-29), and the Priests' Code (Nu. xviii. 21-32; Lev.

with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation.

xxvii. 30–33). The provisions in the two Codes differ remarkably. In Dt. the tithe is levied on vegetable produce alone; and it is appropriated in two years out of three to sacred feasts partaken in by the offerer and his household at the central sanctuary (Dt. xiv. 22–27), in the third year it is to be stored up in the offerer's own city for the relief of the poor (Dt. xiv. 28, 29, xxvi. 12), in both cases the members of the priestly tribe sharing with others in the Israelite's benevolence: in P the tithe is levied on cattle (Lev. xxvii. 32 f.) as well as on vegetable produce, and it is appropriated entirely to the priestly tribe, being paid in the first instance to the 'Levites,' who in their turn pay a tenth of what they receive to the priests. These differences can only be explained by the supposition that the two sets of provisions reflect the usage of different periods of the history; but a further discussion of the subject is not called for here (see *DB.* s. v. 'TITHE'; or the writer's *Deuteronomy*, pp. 169 ff.). Malachi (*v.* 10) presupposes the regulations of P.

offering. Heb. *terūmāh*, quite a different word from the one rendered 'offering' in i. 10, 11, 13, ii. 12, 13, iii. 3, 4, and denoting an entirely different class of things. *Terūmāh* (from הֵרִים 'to lift *or* take off') denotes properly what is 'taken off' from a larger mass, and so separated from it for sacred purposes (LXX often *ἀφαίρεμα*): it is used in particular (1) of gifts taken from the produce of the soil (as tithe, firstfruits, and firstlings), sometimes seemingly including tithes, and sometimes mentioned independently, as Dt. xii. 6, 11, 17 ('tithe and *terūmāh*,' as here); Nu. xv. 19–21, xviii. 11 (see *vv.* 12 f.), 24; Ez. xliv. 30; Neh. x. 37, 39, xii. 44: (2) of contributions of money, spoil, &c., offered for sacred purposes, as Ex. xxv. 2, 3, xxx. 13–15; Nu. xxxi. 29, 41; Ezr. viii. 25 (of donations made at the erection of the Second Temple); and in Ezek. of the land reserved for the priests and Levites (Ez. xlv. 1, 6, 7, &c.): (3) in connexion with sacrifices, only of portions 'taken off' the rest, and forming the priest's due, especially of the 'heave'-thigh (Lev. vii. 32, 34 *al.*). Here it is used, pretty clearly, in the first of these applications. The term is a distinctive one; but unfortunately the rendering in RV. is not uniform: in the Pent., Ezr., Neh., Ez. xx. 40, and here, it is 'heave-offering' (in accordance with a mistaken idea that the term implies a rite of elevation) or 'offering'; in 2 Chr. and other passages in Ezek. it is 'oblation.' See further *DB.* s. v. 'OFFERING,' **5**[1].

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[1] The student is much recommended to ascertain, with the help of a Concordance, or the references given in *DB.*, the occurrences of the

Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there 10
may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith,
saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows
of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall
not be room enough *to receive it.* And I will rebuke the 11
devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the
fruits of your ground ; neither shall your vine cast her
fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

---

9. the curse (ii. 2) : viz. drought, locusts, and bad crops (*vv.* 10^b, 11).

and yet me (emph.) **are ye robbing, ye whole nation :** undeterred by the curse.

10-12. If, however, the tithe is paid regularly in full, prosperity will return.

10. the whole tithe. From the emphasis laid upon the 'whole' tithe, it is evident that a part must often have been withheld.

the storehouse. Or, *treasury*: a chamber in the Temple Court, into which the tithe and *terūmāh* were paid : see Neh. x. 38, xii. 44, xiii. 5, 12, 13. The payment of the whole tithe into the Temple treasuries for the priests and Levites is in accordance with the regulations of P (Nu. xviii. 21-32) ; cf. on *v.* 8.

meat. I. e. **food** (Hab. i. 16), the meaning being provision for the maintenance of the priests and Levites : cf. Neh. xii. 37-39.

prove me, I pray you, herewith : and see whether, if you return to me, I shall not return to you (*v.* 7).

if I will not open for you (Dt. xxviii. 12) **the windows of heaven** (Gen. vii. 11, viii. 2 ; cf. 2 K. vii. 2, 19) : that they may pour down an abundant rain.

11. rebuke for you the devourer. Not 'for your sakes' : the dative is the dat. of reference, exactly as in the two following clauses (where it is paraphrased by 'you') : cf. the footnote on p. 309.

the devourer. Lit. **the eater ;** i. e. (cf. Joel i. 4) the locust, a frequent and destructive plague in Palestine.

cast her fruit before her time : in the Heb. one word, lit. 'miscarry,' i. e. fail to ripen her fruit ; cf. 2 K. ii. 19, 21.

---

term, and to put a mark ('ת or *t.*) against them on the margin of his Revised Version ; he will then perceive for himself how special and distinctive the use of the term is. (*Minḥāh,* and *ḳorbān,* are also often rendered in EVV. 'oblation' or 'offering,' and should be marked similarly, for distinction from each other and from *terūmāh.*)

12 And all nations shall call you happy: for ye shall be a
delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.
13 Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD.
14 Yet ye say, Wherein have we spoken against thee? Ye
have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it
that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked
15 [a] mournfully before the LORD of hosts? And now we call

[a] Or, *in mourning apparel*

---

12. shall call you happy (Ps. lxxii. 17[d]). Cf. for the thought Is. lxi. 9.

ye. The pron. is emphatic.

a delightsome land. Cf. Is. lxii. 4 (see RVm. there).

iii. 13—iv. 3. Another paragraph, addressed apparently to the same class of impatient murmurers as ii. 17—iii. 6. These complained that their religious observances brought them no advantage; it was the wicked who prospered: the prophet replies that the day is coming when the distinction between the evil and the good will be made manifest: the workers of wickedness will be exterminated, and the righteous will triumph over their fall.

13. are stout (*lit.* 'strong,' 'hard') **against me.** The prophet censures the spiritual tone and attitude adopted by these murmurers. Cf. the reproach in ii. 17.

14. what profit . . .? Cf. Job xxi. 15; also above, ii. 17.

kept his charge. In the more general sense of the expression, of religious duties in general (Gen. xxvi. 5; Dt. xi. 1; 1 K. ii. 3), not specifically of ritual observances, as Zech. iii. 7; Lev. viii. 35; Nu. iii. 7, &c.

walked mournfully: cf. Ps. xxxviii. 6, xlii. 9. The meaning is, with outward marks of mourning; and the marg., 'in mourning apparel,' is added to indicate this. קדר does not denote a state of mind (sorrowing or grieving), but (meaning properly *to be dirty*) has reference to the squalid person and attire of a mourner in the East (2 S. xix. 24; Est. iv. 1: cf. sackcloth and ashes as a mark of humiliation and contrition, Jon. iii. 6, Dan. ix. 3, 1 Macc. iii. 47). The class of persons referred to are not the godless: they kept up the forms of religion, but were deficient in spirituality; hence they were impatient, and complained that, when they humbled themselves, and assumed the garb of mourners, on account of their sense of God's anger (as shown by the disasters alluded to in *v.* 11), their humiliation passed unheeded, and brought their country no relief.

before. *Lit.* 'from the face of,' i. e. **on account of,** as after

the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built
up; yea, they tempt God, and are delivered. Then they 16
that feared the LORD spake one with another: and the
LORD hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance
was written before him, for them that feared the LORD,
and that thought upon his name. And they shall be 17
mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in the day [a] that I [b] do

[a] Or, *wherein I do make a peculiar treasure* [b] Or, *do* this

---

other verbs implying humiliation (1 K. xxii. 29, 2 K. xxii. 19), the prep. (מפני, not לפני) expressing not locality, but causation.

15. Now, therefore, we (emph.), &c.: as their religious observances bring them no advantage, they pronounce the godless happy.

the proud: i. e., probably, the lax and worldly Israelites, who, prosperous themselves, looked down with cold and haughty indifference upon their poorer brethren, took advantage of them (*v.* 5^b), and treated the conscientious servants of Yahweh with disdain. Cf. in a Psalm dating from the same period, or a little later, Ps. cxix. 21, 51, 69, 78, 85, 122 (where the 'proud' are spoken of as in various ways vexing the faithful Israelites).

are built up: fig. for, are successful; cf. Job xxii. 23; Jer. xii. 16.

yea, they tempt God, &c.: i. e. they challenge God's judgement by their wickedness, and yet it comes not upon them. 'Tempt' is the word rendered 'prove' in *v.* 10; here in a bad sense, of proving in a spirit of scepticism and disbelief, i. e. *to put to the proof*; so Ps. xcv. 9^b.

16. Then—when they heard these arguments of the sceptics (*vv.* 14 f.)—the pious God-fearing Israelites discoursed together, doubtless reassuring each other with thoughts of faith and trust in God.

and Yahweh hearkened, &c. Yahweh heard what His righteous servants thus said, and resolved to reward them for their fidelity. This resolution is expressed by a figure derived from the custom of the Persian monarchs to have the names of public benefactors inscribed in a book in order that in due time they might receive a suitable reward. See Est. vi. 1 (where 'book of record(s)' is in the Heb. the same as **book of remembrance** here); and cf. Hdt. iii. 140, v. 11, viii. 85.

thought upon: or, *regarded* (Is. xiii. 17, xxxiii. 8).

17. The destined reward: they will be Yahweh's own possession, and under His fatherly protection, in the day upon which He appears to judgement.

make, *even* a peculiar treasure; and I will spare them, as
18 a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall
ye return and discern between the righteous and the
wicked, between him that serveth God and him that
4 serveth him not. [a] For, behold, the day cometh, it burneth
as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall

---

[a] [Ch. iii. 19 in Heb.]

---

in the day on which I do (or **act**): עשה ('do') used absolutely, as Ps. xxii. 31, xxxvii. 5^b, lii. 9; Is. xliv. 23, xlviii. 11 (there is no 'it' in these passages in the Heb.); Jer. xiv. 7 ('work'). 'That I do make' (RV.), though quite possible grammatically (Ps. cxviii. 24), is less probable. The recurrence of these words (alone) in iv. 3 is against marg. [a] (p. 325).

a peculiar treasure. In the Heb. one word, the one (סְגֻלָּה) applied to Israel in Ex. xix. 5; and repeated thence (with 'people' added) in Dt. vii. 6, xiv. 2, xxvi. 18, Ps. cxxxv. 4 (cf. 1 Pet. ii. 9): see also, in illustration of the proper sense of the word, Eccl. ii. 8. The high privilege, which Israel as a nation had forfeited, of being Yahweh's *segullāh*, or special possession, is here transferred to the faithful minority of true and loyal worshippers. 'Peculiar' is used in the old etymological sense of the word of 'specially one's own' (Lat. *peculium*, the private property of a child or slave).

will spare: in contrast to the condemned wicked.

as a man spareth his own son that serveth him: at a time viz. when he would be punishing his 'stubborn and rebellious son' (Dt. xxi. 18-21). Yahweh, in the day of judgement on the wicked, will display towards His own faithful servants the love and affection of a father towards his dutiful son.

18. And so, when the judgement breaks, **ye shall return** from your present scepticism (*v.* 14 f.), and perceive what you now deny, the distinction between the righteous and the wicked.

iv. 1. For: giving the reason for iii. 18.

cometh. Properly, **is coming.** Cf. the note on iii. 1.

burning as an oven. The *tannūr* (Gen. xv. 17; Hos. vii. 4) was a portable earthenware jar, in shape like a truncated cone, heated by burning embers placed in it: see an illustration in Whitehouse, *A Primer of Heb. Antiquities*, p. 73; cf. *EB.* i. 605.

stubble: for the comparison, cf. Is. v. 24, Obad. 18.

shall set them ablaze (להט): thus signally reversing the judgement of the sceptics, iii. 15.

burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave
them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my 2
name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in
his wings; and ye shall go forth, and gambol as calves of
the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they 3

---

neither root nor branch. The figure changes from that of 'stubble' to that of a tree utterly destroyed by some great conflagration. Cf. Job xv. 30.

2, 3. The very different future in store for the righteous.

2. the sun of righteousness. A beautiful and striking figure: the deliverance of Yahweh's servants on the day of judgement will be a signal vindication of their righteousness; and so this is figured as a sun beaming forth, conspicuous to all, and bringing healing in its wings—i. e. curing them for ever from the wounds which their present trials have inflicted. The 'of' is epexegetical (= consisting in). The figure has close analogies in Ps. xxxvii. 6; Is. lxii. 1^b.

arise. Properly **beam forth,** as regularly, when 'rise' or 'arise' is used of, or with allusion to, the sun: e. g. Dt. xxxiii. 2^b, Is. lx. 1^b, 2^b, 3^b.

in its wings. Either directly fig. for rays; or indirectly, with allusion to representations of the solar disk with wings issuing from either side, often found on Assyrian and Persian monuments: as the rays of the physical sun spread light and warmth over the earth, so will the 'wings' of the 'sun of righteousness' bring healing, i. e. new life, health, and strength to the suffering righteous Israelites. **His** in RV. (in the Heb. *her*, referring to the fem. 'sun') is an archaism for **its** (which never occurs in AV. of either OT. or NT.).

The Fathers interpreted the 'sun of righteousness' of Christ (hence no doubt the capital S in 'Sun' in AV.); but though the figure is a beautiful and appropriate one to apply to the Saviour of the world, this cannot be the sense intended by Malachi: for Malachi is addressing the righteous of his own time, and promises how *they* will soon have their righteousness vindicated, and enjoy the satisfaction of triumphing over the wicked.

2^b, 3. The exultation of the righteous at their deliverance.

2^b. They will **come forth** from their hiding-places, and 'break into life and energy, like young calves leaping from the dark pen into the early sunshine' (G. A. Smith, p. 370). On 'gambol' (LXX σκιρτήσετε), see on Hab. i. 8.

3. 'To this morning landscape a grim figure is added. They

shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that
I [a] do make, saith the Lord of hosts.
4 Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I
commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes
5 and judgements. Behold, I will send you Elijah the
prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord
6 come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers [b]to the

[a] Or, *do* this [b] Or, *with*

---

will tread down the wicked and the arrogant like ashes beneath their feet' (*ibid.*). Cf. the picture in Is. lxvi. 24.

ashes: to which they will have been reduced by the fire of *v.* 1.

in the day on which I do. As iii. 17.

4-6. Final exhortation to obey the Mosaic law, with a promise that Elijah will be sent to restore love and unity to the divided people, and avert if possible the threatened doom.

4. the law ('*tôrāh*') **of Moses, my servant.** Both are expressions used often by Deuteronomic writers: see (all being passages due to the compilers) (1) Josh. viii. 31, 32, xxiii. 6, 1 K. ii. 3; 2 K. xiv. 6, xxiii. 25; and (2) Josh. i. 2, 7, and 'Yahweh's servant,' Dt. xxxiv. 5; Josh. i. 1, 13, 15, and often in this book.

in Horeb. Both 'Horeb' and 'statutes and judgements' are expressions characteristic of Dt. (i. 2, 6, 19, iv. 10, 15 *al.* [P always says 'Sinai']; iv. 1, 5, v. 1, xii. 1, xxvi. 14 *al.*). The prophet is probably thinking of the moral and spiritual precepts of Deuteronomy. *V.* 6 seems to show that dissensions were rife among the people at the time, which might be put an end to by obedience to the principles of love and philanthropy so often inculcated in Deuteronomy.

judgements. Better, **ordinances:** see on Zeph. ii. 3.

5. Elijah, the great reformer, who, according to 2 K. ii, had been carried up into heaven, will reappear to prepare the people for the great day on which Yahweh comes for judgement. The expression is borrowed from Joel ii. 31; in fact the whole of *v.* 5^{b} (from 'before') agrees *verbatim* with Joel ii. 31.

I will send. Properly, **I am sending:** his appearance is pictured as immediate. Cf. on iii. 1, iv. 1.

6. shall turn, &c.: i. e. shall restore unity in the divided people. A state of grave social discord and family division (cf. Mic. vii. 1-6, especially *v.* 6), imperilling even the existence of the community, seems to be indicated. RVm. means, 'shall turn (to God) the heart of the fathers together with (that of) the children,' &c.; but this is a forced and unnatural interpretation.

children, and the heart of the children [a] to their fathers; lest I come and smite the [b] earth with a [c] curse.

[a] Or, *with* [b] Or, *land* [c] Or, *ban*

---

lest, &c. Unless Elijah does this, ruin is imminent for the land.

the earth. RVm. **the land** is preferable; for Malachi is thinking only of the land of Israel.

with the ban. I. e. with destruction: see on Zech. xiv. 11.

Elijah was a prominent figure in later Jewish belief; and, at least about and after the period of the Christian era, many legends were current about him. The belief that he would reappear for the moral and social reformation of Israel may have been already formed before Malachi wrote; but whether that was the case or not, it was subsequently, and still is, firmly held by the Jews. Thus in the NT. we read (Mk. ix. 11 f. = Mt. xvii. 10 f.), 'The scribes say that Elijah must first come' (cf. the references to Elijah in Mt. xxvii. 47 = Mk. xv. 35 'Behold, he calleth Elijah,' and John i. 21 'Art thou Elijah?' 25), and our Lord replies, 'Elijah indeed cometh first and restoreth all things,' adding in the following verse that he had already come, and they had done unto him as they listed, with evident reference to John the Baptist: cf. on iii. 1; and see also Mt. xi. 14 'If ye are willing to receive (it), this is Elijah, which *is to come*'; Lk. i. 17 'He (John) shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient (to walk) in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared (for him).'

In the eulogy on Elijah in Ecclus. xlviii. 1–11, *v.* 10 is based upon this passage of Malachi[1]. For further particulars respecting the post-Biblical Jewish beliefs about Elijah, see Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus*, ii. 703-6; Schürer, § 29 (ii. 440-2). The general Jewish view was, and still is, that he is to be the forerunner of the Messiah, especially for the sake of bringing peace, solving difficulties, settling legal and other disputes, deciding who were by birth entitled to belong to Israel, and calling to repentance. The Jew in Justin (*c. Tryph.* cc. 8, 49) says further that Elijah was expected to anoint the Messiah.

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[1] Render:

'Who is written down [viz. in Mal. iv. 5 f.] in (i.e. to come with) reproofs for (their) seasons [in the Heb. text: 'as ready for a season'],
'To appease anger before wrath [Heb.: 'To make to cease anger before' (the text here breaks off; supply perhaps, as suggested by the Syriac, 'the day of Yahweh')],
'To turn the heart of the father to the son [Heb., Syr.: 'of the fathers to the sons'],
'And to establish the tribes of Israel.'

Additional Note on Nah. i. 13.

The two cuneiform tablets, found recently at Gezer, 18 miles north-west of Jerusalem (*Quarterly Statement of the Pal. Explor. Fund*, 1904, pp. 229 ff., 1905, pp. 206 ff.), seem to afford direct evidence of the political influence of Assyria in Palestine during the reign of Asshurbanipal (B. C. 668–625). The tablets, which date from B. C. 651, and 648 (*ibid.* 1905, pp. 209, 210), are contracts for the sale of land: they are both dated by Assyrian eponymies,—the second by that of a viceroy (*shaknu*) of Carchemish; and the sellers in one, and most of the witnesses in both, bear Assyrian names. They may be taken to show at least that there was an Assyrian colony or garrison at Gezer, if not that the country round was under Assyrian domination.

Note on the terms 'Messiah' and 'Messianic.'

In order rightly to understand these terms, it is necessary to bear in mind the proper meaning of the word 'Messiah.' 'Messiah' means 'anointed'; and in its Hebrew form it is often used of the Israelitish king as 'Yahweh's anointed' (1 S. xvi. 6, xxiv. 7, 11, &c.). The later Jews, upon the basis of this usage, designated the future ideal ruler, whom the prophets often depicted, by the title, 'the anointed king' (in Aramaic, מַלְכָּא מְשִׁיחָא). This is the origin of the term 'Messiah': it is properly applicable only to the ideal *king* of such passages as Is. ix. 6 f., or Zech. ix. 9; and 'Messianic' ought strictly to be limited to those prophecies of an ideal future in which the ideal 'king' is also included. The latter term is, however commonly applied, in a wider sense (cf. on Hag. ii. 7), to other prophecies of an ideal future, even though the figure of the ideal king forms no feature in them. It is, however, a serious mistake to apply the term 'Messiah' to ideal figures drawn by the prophets, which, though fulfilled by Christ, are still not figures of an ideal 'king.' Thus there is no 'Messiah,' or ideal 'king,' in Is. xl–lxvi. When a Jew is asked, Can you not see the Messiah in Is. xlix, liii, &c.? he naturally, and rightly, answers, No. The figure of the 'Righteous servant,' who combines in himself the ideal attributes of the prophet and the nation, prefigures Christ, not as a 'king,' but as a *prophet*; and only confusion and misunderstanding can result if this ideal figure is described as the 'Messiah.' The two ideal characters, of the prophet in Is. xl–lxvi, and of the king ('Messiah') in other prophets, were united, when the time of fulfilment came, in Christ; but in the Old Testament they are distinct (cf. Riehm., *Messianic Prophecy*, 1891, pp. 121, 191 f., 283–8).

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[1] So also Dt. xxviii. 26, Jer. vii. 33. Elsewhere, as Is. xvii. 2, Nah. ii. 11, Ez. xxxiv. 28, the same Hebrew is rendered 'make afraid.'

[2] See *DB.*, or Wright's *Bible Word-Book,* s.v. The Hebrew in Hab. ii. 7 means 'to shake to and fro *or* strongly.'

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